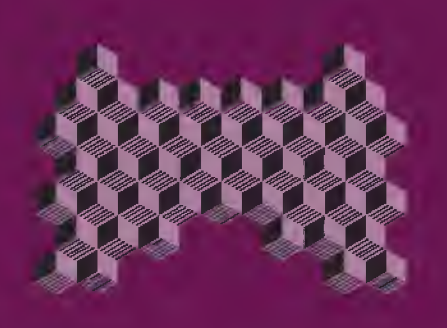
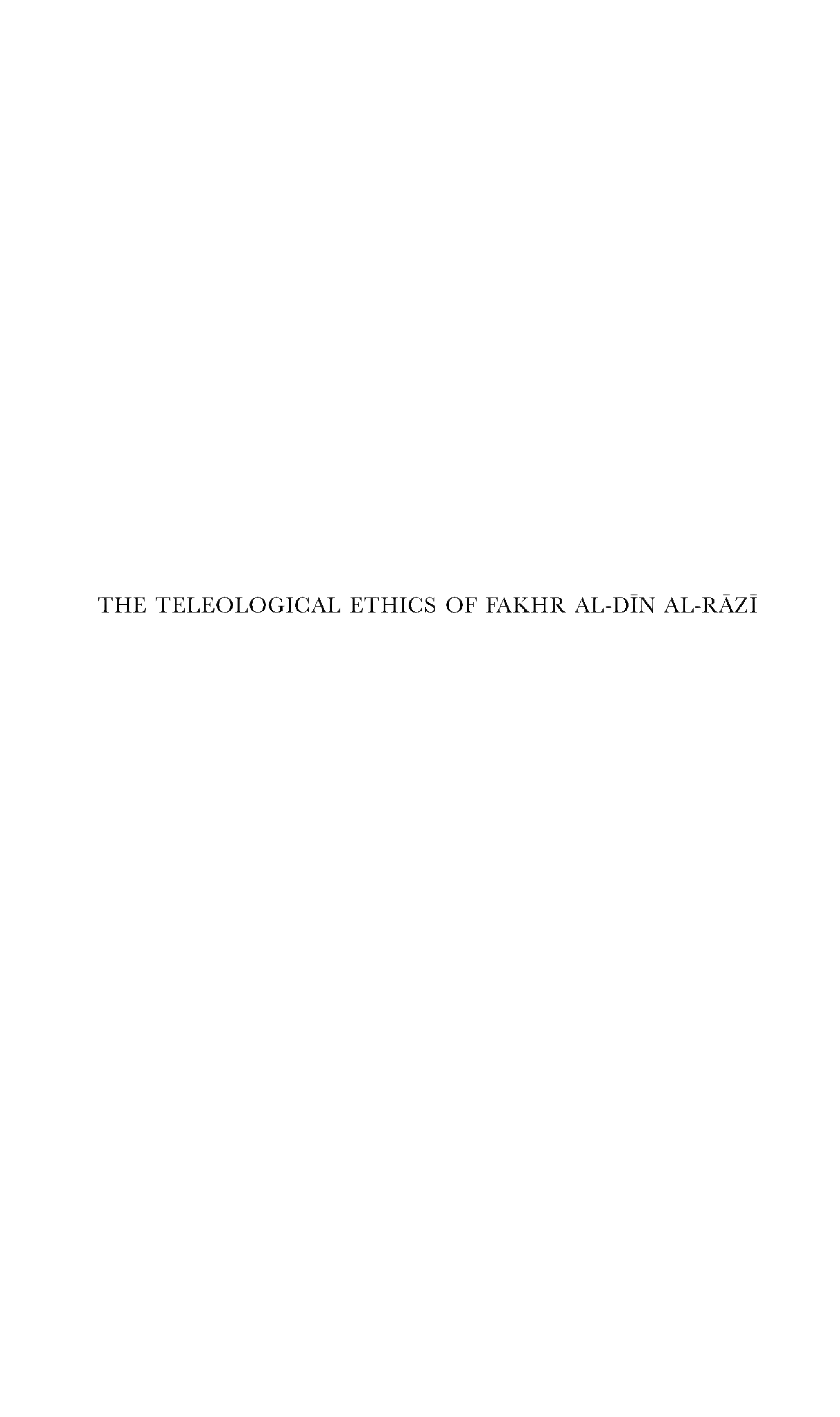
The Teleological Ethics of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī



AYMAN SHIHADEH

BRILL



THE TELEOLOGICAL ETHICS OF FAKHR AL-DĪN AL-RĀZĪ

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CONTENTS

PREFACE

The present study aspires, first and foremost, to make a contribution to two main areas of interest in Islamic intellectual history, namely ethical philosophy and the thought of Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī. I hope to have demonstrated that al-Rāzī is one of the most important ethicists in Muslim history, and to have produced some stimuli for further research on his thought, as he remains one of the most influential, yet sorely understudied, medieval thinkers.

The present monograph is based, often remotely, on a doctoral thesis that I submitted in 2002 to the faculty of Oriental Studies, Oxford University, under the supervision of Professor Yahya Michot and Dr Fritz Zimmermann. I would like to express my gratitude to both my supervisors, from whom my research has benefited in numerous ways. I am indebted to Professor Michot for more recent exchanges of ideas, many of which are relevant to questions tackled in this thoroughly revised version.

I would like also to extend my sincere thanks to Professor Wilferd Madelung, Professor Hans Daiber and Dr Tony Street, who provided me with valuable comments on this study, to Professor Yahya Ibn Junaid and Dr Nizam Yaquby, who both assisted me in acquiring copies of some manuscripts, and to Sobia Syyed for reading the monograph and suggesting some corrections in style. Needless to say, I alone am responsible for its present form.

Finally, I am truly grateful to the following institutions: to the Muslim Academic Trust, Cambridge, for generously funding my graduate study; to Oxford University for funding provided during my doctoral study; to the British, Berlin State, Marʿashī-Najafī and Princeton University Libraries, for facilitating access to manuscripts of *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*, allowing me to produce a critical edition thereof; and to Brill for undertaking this publication.

INTRODUCTION

General Introduction

The first centuries of Islam witnessed the emergence of different traditions of ethical thinking, within which several distinct ethical theories were propounded. The most sophisticated philosophical theories were developed within the two largely independent traditions of *kalām* and *falsafa*, which clashed at the level of ethics and in other related areas, including metaphysics, cosmology, psychology and epistemology.

The main ethical concern of the classical *mutakallimūn* was to investigate the nature of God's justice and the goodness of His acts generally, which they approached through analytical discussions of ethical language, metaphysics and epistemology. Similar discussions, likewise with an emphasis on action, can also be found in *uṣūl al-fiqh*, and concern the establishment of general normative principles for human conduct. The *falāsifa*, on the other hand, were chiefly, but by no means solely, interested in the development of human character, primarily by engendering virtues, which are essentially dispositions internal to the individual.

The gap separating the two traditions was initially so wide that many notions central to one tradition of ethical theory were completely alien to the other, in which they would normally be dismissed *in toto*, without engagement in any proper dialogue. Yet there then emerged signs of increasing, and more positive, interaction between *kalām* and *falsafa*, culminating in the efforts of al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who was both a severe critic of the *falāsifa* and deeply influenced by them in many respects. A century later, Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was to open the gates widely, allowing a more liberal exchange of ideas, a 'synthesis' even, between *kalām* and *falsafa*. This feature manifests no less in his ethics than in other areas of his thought.

The present study is thus, at once, both a comprehensive analysis of one major facet of al-Rāzī's thought, viz. his ethical theory, and an exploration of the main trends and debates in its wider intellectual background. It shows that he sets forth a sophisticated and original ethical theory, which is both eclectic and highly consistent internally.

In this theory, he departs with classical Ashʿarī voluntarism.

Al-Rāzī is significant in this regard not as a moralist (al-Ghazālī is evidently a more elaborate moralist than he is), but mainly as an outstandingly analytical and thoroughgoing ethical philosopher. In this respect, his discussions of certain ethical themes are among the most penetrating in Islamic history and will easily match corresponding discussions in any extant Muʿtazilī texts. This owes partly to his firsthand familiarity and engagement with the writings of the Muʿtazila, especially the school of Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī (d. 436/1044), to an extent unprecedented among their earlier critics (and which was apparently unsurpassed in later Sunni theology, to which Muʿtazilism became less relevant). Al-Rāzī also had a great deal of influence on later ethical thought in Islam, especially in *kalām*; and his main work on the science of character, *Kitāb fī ʿilm al-akhlāq*, is listed by Ibn al-Akfānī (d. 749/1348) as a major representative of its genre (however, its circulation seems to have become limited in later centuries).[1]

Al-Rāzī develops a metaethical theory that underlies both his *falsafī* ethics of character and his *kalām* and juristic ethics of action.[2] This underlying theory manifests differently in these two different contexts: as a consequentialism in relation to action, and as a perfectionism in relation to character. Although at the level of normative ethics his elaboration of the relation between his ethics of action and his ethics of character remains in certain respects underdeveloped, the relation between the two at the metaethical level is made clear: consequentialism and perfectionism are two aspects of the same teleological ethics, rather than separate ethical theories.[3]

These two areas of ethical enquiry are discussed separately in al-

[1] Ibn al-Akfānī, *Irshād*, 401. The two other representative works that he lists are Ibn Sīnā's *Riṣāla fī l-akhlāq* and Miskawayh's *Al-Fawz al-aṣghar*.

[2] Contemporary ethical philosophy is normally divided into the sub-fields of metaethics and normative ethics. The distinction is not universally accepted, primarily because the two fields are arguably not mutually exclusive. Metaethics, or so-called 'second order' ethics, seeks to understand the nature and justification of ethical judgement. Normative, 'first order' ethics denotes attempts to defend or establish ethical judgements on specific types of human action, or norms and principles to guide human action (cf. Sh. Kagan, *Normative Ethics*, esp. 1–6; articles "Analytic ethics", *REP*; "Metaethics", *EE*).

[3] These different types of ethical theory are defined p. 47–8 *infra*.

Rāzī's writings for several reasons. First of all, the classical *mutakallimūn* focused on action exclusively, as they were concerned with investigating how God's acts relate to His creatures. Al-Rāzī, too, discusses divine action, which he approaches on the basis of a thorough analysis of human action. Moreover, in developing his ethical theory, he works within separate established traditions, each having its own scope and ethos. He does not attempt to produce a synthesis between the science of character and jurisprudence. Yet he does provide some general guidelines on how the ethics of action and the ethics of character should be viewed in relation to each other.

The starting point for this study will be al-Rāzī's ethics of action (Chapter II), for which first we will need to examine his theory of action, which is central to his metaethics (Chapter I). Since he starts as a classical Ashʿarī theologian with little interest in the examination of character, his interest in action will have chronological precedence in his intellectual career. Even in his later thought, his analysis of action does not presuppose a theory of character (which normally would give moral primacy to character over action), although it will be complemented by such a theory. Chapter III will then examine his theory of virtue, including his ethics of character and the influence of his theory of virtue on his later theory of prophecy.

Chapter IV will focus on the epistle entitled *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā* (*Censure of the Pleasures of This World*), which is published here and studied for the first time (a critical edition can be found as an Appendix). In this immensely interesting short text, which al-Rāzī wrote towards the end of his life, he expresses pronounced moral pessimism and intellectual scepticism. The background of this stance in his writings more widely will also be explored.

The narrower theoretical themes covered in this study will be introduced in their appropriate places in the following chapters. First, however, we should provide a short biography of al-Rāzī and a brief descriptive bibliography of his main writings that are cited in this study.

Al-Rāzī's Biography[4]

Abū ʿAbdullāh Muḥammad Ibn ʿUmar Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī was born in 544/1149 in the city of Rayy to its main preacher; whence his title, "Ibn Khaṭīb al-Rayy", or more commonly "Ibn al-Khaṭīb". His father Ḍiyā' al-Dīn (d. 559/1164), who was a prominent Shāfiʿī and Ashʿarī,[5] was Fakhr al-Dīn's first teacher in both *kalām* and *fiqh*.[6] Al-Rāzī, thus, began as a very traditional Ashʿarī, as is clear from his earliest books. Among those he studied with after his father died were Aḥmad Ibn Zarīnkum al-Kamāl al-Simnānī (d. ?) of Simnān, not far from Rayy, and the then famous philosopher-theologian Majd al-Dīn al-Jīlī (d. ?) of Marāgha in Azerbaijan, who was a student of Muḥammad Ibn Yaḥyā al-Naysābūrī (d. 548/1153), al-Ghazālī's student (d. 505/1111). Reportedly, he then continued to study the philosophical sciences independently.[7]

Al-Rāzī travelled widely throughout his life, mainly in Persia, parts of central Asia and northern India.[8] At some stage in his travels, he established a close relationship with the Ghūrid sultan Ghiyāth al-Dīn (d. 599/1203) of Ghazna, and reportedly worked for him, and then for his brother and successor, Shihāb al-Dīn (d. 602/1206). Later, while maintaining a good relationship with the Ghūrids, he became close to their opponent, the Khwārizm-Shāh ʿAlā' al-Dīn Tekesh (d. 596/1200), worked for him, and taught his son, Muḥammad (d. 617/1219). When the latter inherited the sultanate, al-Rāzī's status

[4] Some of the main classical biographies of al-Rāzī are: Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 3, 34–45; al-Qifṭī, *Ikhbār*, 190–2; al-ʿAsqalānī, *Lisān*, 4, 426–9; Abū Shāma, *Dhayl*, 68; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4, 248–52; Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Tārīkh*, 240; 254; Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Jāmiʿ*, 9, 306–8; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13, 55–6; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 4, 248–58; al-Dhahabī, *Tārīkh*, 43, 211–23; al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 8, 81–96; al-Yāfiʿī, *Mir'āt*, 4, 7–11; al-Shahrazūrī, *Nuzha*, 2, 144–50. See also: Muḥammad al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, 8–55; Georges Anawati, "*Tamhīd*", 193–201; "Elements"; "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī" in *EI*[2]; John Cooper, "al-Razi, Fakhr al-Din", *REP*; Yasin Ceylan, *Theology*, 1–13; Tony Street, "Life and Works"; Jacques Jomier, "Qur'anic Commentary".

[5] Cf. al-Subkī, *Ṭabaqāt*, 3, 159 ff.; 7, 242; Ibn Khallikān, *Wafayāt*, 4, 252.

[6] Al-Rāzī's Ashʿarī chain extends from his father, to Abū l-Qāsim al-Anṣārī, to al-Juwaynī, to Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarā'īnī, to Abū l-Ḥasan al-Bāhilī, to al-Ashʿarī (*Taḥṣīl al-ḥaqq*, 52; cf. al-Yāfiʿī, *Mir'āt*, 4, 11). He also presents his Shāfiʿī juristic chain, starting with his father.

[7] Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 3, 34.

[8] E.g. *Munāẓarāt*, 7; *Maṭālib*, 7, 388–91. On his travels, see J. Jomier, "Qur'anic Commentary", *passim*.

increased greatly. It appears that although he was initially poor,[9] al-Rāzī acquired great wealth later on, perhaps as a result of his high-profile links. In Herat, the Ghūrid sultan built him a school, where he taught a great number of students.

Accounts of his travels also abound with debates he had with proponents of various other theological schools, especially the Karrāmiyya,[10] Muʿtazilīs and Ḥanbalīs. His debating abilities brought him notoriety. He himself recorded some of his debates in a separate collection, the *Munāẓarāt*, while others are referred to by later sources.[11] On one occasion, a debate he had with the head of the Karrāmiyya in Fīrūzkoh, the capital of a branch of the Ghūrids, resulted in a riot, forcing him to depart.[12] The extent of the enmity that this sect had towards him was such that, in his deathbed will, he asked for his body to be buried secretly in a remote place, apparently for fear that supporters of this sect may exhume and mutilate it. Al-Rāzī died in 606/1210 in Herat.

The Development of al-Rāzī's Thought and the Chronology of His Works

Most studies on al-Rāzī's thought rely on a more or less narrow selection of his writings, often with little attention paid to their chronology. The sheer volume of his writings—he is a main contender to being the most prolific of all Muslim theologians and philosophers[13]—and the fact that some of the most important among them remain unpublished, are normally sufficient to place the student of his thought under a formidable burden, more so than is the case with most other major Muslim thinkers. Yet, positively, in contrast to some other thinkers, most of al-Rāzī's works, including the most important ones, have survived. In the absolute majority of these texts, one encounters no problems in attributing them to

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[9] E.g. al-Qifṭī, *Ikhbār*, 190.

[10] On the Karrāmiyya, an anthropomorphist sect, see *Iʿtiqādāt*, 101; al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1, 108–13; article "Karrāmiyya" in *EI*[2].

[11] E.g. al-Qazwīnī, *Āthār*, 252–3; cf. *Tafsīr*, 7, 88; 8, 69–71.

[12] Ibn al-Athīr, *Kāmil*, 12, 151–2.

[13] Biographers report that he authored more than 200 works (Ibn al-Sāʿī, *Jāmiʿ*, 9, 307; Ibn Kathīr, *Bidāya*, 13, 55). Around a third of these are known to be extant. The most useful (though incomplete and out of date) published bibliography of al-Rāzī's known works remains: M. al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, 56–164.

their author. Most, including all the important ones, are in Arabic; some are in Persian.

The present study uses the most comprehensive selection of al-Rāzī's works to date; several are used for the first time. This has allowed a more accurate understanding of the complex developments that took place in his thought, which are often subtle, but sometimes striking. Some of his earliest and latest works give the impression of being written by very different authors (yet they *are* his, without doubt). To give one curious example, while in the early *Ishāra*, Abū l-ʿAlāʾ al-Maʿarrī is cursed for his heresy, he is referred to appreciatively in the late *Tafsīr* and *Maṭālib* as the philosopher-poet (*ḥakīm al-shuʿarāʾ*). It is an all too familiar mistake for studies to cite a view presented in one or two of al-Rāzī's books as being simply his view, when in fact contrasting views may be readily found in his other, or later, published works.

Moreover, as was the practice of many other authors, al-Rāzī will often treat a problem thoroughly in one book, and will then refer to it in passing in later books, sometimes without mention of the earlier discussion. In one book, he writes that he will avoid discussing topics that have been discussed elsewhere.[14] It is, therefore, not uncommon for readers of a given work by al-Rāzī, pre-modern and modern alike, to conclude that he fails to address a particular problem, when in fact the author himself is satisfied in having done so elsewhere.

At this stage, we are able to determine the exact dating of some of al-Rāzī's works and to estimate the general, relative chronology of others. Some texts remain very difficult to date, except sometimes very tentatively. Internal evidence of dates, such as references made to other works, may often mislead, since some works underwent revision by their author years after they were first written. Thus, e.g. we find references in the *Mabāḥith* to *Sharḥ Kulliyyāt al-Qānūn* and vice versa, which leads us to conclude either that both were written in the same period, or that references in at least one of them were inserted in a later revision.

Al-Rāzī's earliest works are strictly classical Ashʿarī in style and content.[15] This is most evident in *Uṣūl al-dīn* and, to a slightly lesser

[14] *Kamāliyya*, (Ar.), 88; (Per.), 114.

[15] See M. al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, 619–26; A. Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 163.

degree, the *Ishāra*. In the later *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, he introduces Aristotelian logic into *kalām*, but still proclaims, in line with classical Ashʿarism, that the purpose of his theological enquiry is to defend the orthodox creed. Later, he wholeheartedly embraces the growing eclecticism of his milieu, and starts to write works on *falsafa*, logic, medicine and the occult. At this stage, he writes the *Mabāḥith* and the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, which he describes as '*falsafī*', or '*ḥikmī*', works, in contrast to his '*kalāmī*' works. He then returns to writing in the latter genre, gradually synthesising *kalām* and *falsafa*.[16]

The following is a chronological list, with brief descriptions, of some of the most important works used in the present study. Most of the internal evidence for the dating has been omitted; a systematic evaluation thereof will go well beyond the scope of this bibliographic introduction.

— [*Kitāb fī Uṣūl al-dīn, ʿaqā'id ahl al-sunna*]. The original title of this unpublished volume is uncertain; hence, it will be referred to as *Uṣūl al-dīn*.[17] Given its classical Ashʿarī content and approach, it appears to be the earliest known theological book authored by al-Rāzī. He demonstrates great familiarity with the works of al-Ashʿarī (d. 324/936) and the main proponents of his school, to whom he refers as 'our masters' (*a'immatunā*), including al-Bāqillānī (d. 403/1013), his student Abū Jaʿfar al-Simnānī (d. 444/1052), Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarā'īnī (d. 418/1027) and al-Juwaynī (d. 478/1085).

— *Al-Ishāra fī ʿilm al-kalām*.[18] This book represents al-Rāzī's earliest, highly Ashʿarī stage, but is slightly later than *Uṣūl al-dīn*.[19]

— *Al-Maḥṣūl fī ʿilm al-uṣūl*. Completed in 576/1180,[20] this is al-Rāzī's most important, and highly influential, work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*.

— *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl fī dirāyat al-uṣūl*. Still unpublished, this large *kalām*

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[16] Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 164 ff.

[17] It could be *Tahdhīb al-dalā'il fī ʿuyūn al-masā'il*, mentioned in *Iʿtiqādāt*, 146.

[18] The original title is most probably *Ishārat al-nuẓẓār ilā laṭā'if al-asrār*, a *kalām* book that al-Rāzī mentions in *Iʿtiqādāt*, 146.

[19] E.g. al-Ashʿarī is referred to as *Shaykhunā Abū l-Ḥasan raḍiya Allāhu ʿanhu* (e.g. *Ishāra*, fol. 3b; 36b; 62a).

[20] *Maḥṣūl*, Ṭāha al-ʿAlwānī's editorial introduction, 48. The *Maḥṣūl* is mentioned in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, fol. 200b.

work is one of the most influential texts in the history of Islamic theology. It represents a crucial transitory stage between al-Rāzī's earlier Ashʿarī thought and his later philosophical theology.[21]

— *Al-Sirr al-maktūm* (*fī mukhāṭabat al-nujūm*, or *fī asrār al-nujūm*, or *fī ʿilm al-siḥr wa-l-ṭalāsim wa-l-nujūm*, etc.). Still an intriguing aspect of his career, and apparently written at a relatively early stage thereof,[22] this book discusses the theory and practice of magic. It may give credence to the report that he spent some time in his youth experimenting with alchemy.[23]

— *Al-Mabāḥith al-mashriqiyya*. The main influences on what appears to be the earliest of al-Rāzī's surviving *falsafī* books are Ibn Sīnā (d. 429/1037), Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī (d. 560/1164–5), and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (d. 313/925). This work does not represent al-Rāzī's philosophy in its maturity, but contains many views that differ considerably from his later and earlier views.[24]

— *Al-Mulakhkhaṣ fī l-ḥikma wa-l-manṭiq*. Al-Rāzī seems to have revised this *falsafī* work in 579/1183.[25] It has many similarities to the *Mabāḥith*, but is generally more concise (hence its title) and also includes a section on logic. It shows greater consistency and independence from Ibn Sīnā than the *Mabāḥith*.

— *Sharḥ al-Kulliyyāt min kitāb al-Qānūn*. A commentary on the theoretical introduction of Ibn Sīnā's *Qānūn*, on medicine, probably written around 580/1184.[26]

— *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ*. Alternatively entitled *Kitāb fī ʿilm al-akhlāq*, this book has two parts: the first on the theory of the science of character, the second on practical ethics in detail. Its dating is uncertain, but appears relatively early.

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[21] Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 163 ff.

[22] Mentioned in: *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 323a; *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 143; *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 2, 193–4.

[23] Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Tārīkh*, 240.

[24] Mentioned in *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 337a.

[25] Dated in the author's colophon of MS. 1510, Leiden University Library.

[26] Ibn al-ʿIbrī, *Tārīkh*, 240. The *Mabāḥith* is mentioned in *Sharḥ al-Qānūn*, fol. 22b; 43b. The latter is mentioned in *Mabāḥith*, 2, 258; 2, 409.

— *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt.* Apparently written around 580/1184,[27] this work presents a critical commentary on Ibn Sīnā's philosophy. The logic section is still unpublished.

— *Munāẓarāt fī bilād mā warā' al-nahr.* A collection of autobiographical accounts of several debates on theological, philosophical and juristic themes, in which al-Rāzī participated during his travels in Transoxiana around 582/1186.[28]

— *Iʿtiqādāt firaq al-Muslimīn wa-l-mushrikīn.* A short heresiography. Immediately after the section on *falsafa*, al-Rāzī concludes the book by affirming his orthodoxy.

— *Muḥaṣṣal afkār al-mutaqaddimīn wa-l-muta'akhkhirīn...* A compendium of philosophical theology, and one of al-Rāzī's most influential and widely studied works.[29]

— *Al-Arbaʿīn fī uṣūl al-dīn.* Another of al-Rāzī's influential *kalām* works. Internal evidence suggests that it was written after the *Muḥaṣṣal*.[30]

— *Lubāb al-Ishārāt.* A critical abridgement of Ibn Sīnā's *al-Ishārāt wa-l-tanbīhāt*, probably written in 597/1201.[31]

— *Manāqib al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī.* Authored in 597/1201,[32] this work is a defence of al-Shāfiʿī and the Shāfiʿī school, apparently against Ḥanafī critics.

— *Lawāmiʿ al-bayyināt fī (tafsīr) al-asmā' wa-l-ṣifāt.* A work on divine names and attributes.[33]

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[27] Mentioned in *Muḥaṣṣal*, 202. Also, both the *Mabāḥith* and the *Mulakhkhaṣ* are mentioned in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 1, 153. It was taught in Bukhara in 582/1186 (see following note).

[28] The date is mentioned in *Munāẓarāt*, 32. The *Mabāḥith*, the *Mulakhkhaṣ* and *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, are mentioned in *Munāẓarāt*, 60.

[29] Cf. Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 171–2.

[30] The *Tafsīr* is mentioned in *Arbaʿīn*, 423. This suggests that al-Rāzī wrote the *Arbaʿīn* around 595–600/1199–1204, after starting the *Tafsīr*.

[31] Kâtib Çelebi, *Kashf al-ẓunūn*, 1, 94.

[32] *Manāqib*, 538.

[33] Mentioned in *Tafsīr*, 15, 55; 22, 13.

— *Al-Jabr wa-l-qadar*. This work is dedicated to the problem of destiny and human choice, and discusses rational, scriptural and traditional evidence.[34] Its contents suggest that it was written at a late stage.

— *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, or *Mafatīḥ al-ghayb*. This huge commentary on the Qur'ān was started around 595/1199. Chapters 17–30 were authored in 601–3/1205–7.[35] Reports that al-Rāzī did not complete this work, and that it was completed later by one of his disciples, appear to be unfounded.[36]

— *Maʿālim uṣūl al-dīn*. This concise work on *kalām* is perhaps al-Rāzī's last work in the genre. It is clearly of late authorship, but whether it was written before or after the completion of the *Tafsīr* is unclear. Al-Ṣafadī writes that it is the last of al-Rāzī's smaller books.[37]

— *Maʿālim uṣūl al-fiqh*. A work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, which is shorter than the *Maḥṣūl*. The two *Maʿālim* works appear to be parts of a larger series.

— *Asrār al-tanzīl wa-anwār al-ta'wīl*. An unfinished work which examines theological themes in the light of Qur'ānic statements. It appears to have been written after *Al-Tafsīr al-kabīr*, and is sometimes referred to in later sources as the *Smaller Commentary* on the Qur'ān (*Al-Tafsīr al-ṣaghīr*).

— *Al-Maṭālib al-ʿāliya min al-ʿilm al-ilāhī*. One of the lengthiest of al-Rāzī's philosophical and theological works, and in many ways the most interesting. Books 1–2 were finished in 603/1207, soon after the completion of the *Tafsīr*. More than a year later, in 605/1208–9, books 3–7 were apparently finished over a period of 5 months,

[34] Although published as book 9 of the *Maṭālib*, there is much evidence to show that this is a separate book. Its style differs from that of the *Maṭālib*. It is not listed in its initial plan (*Maṭālib*, 1, 63–4). There are references to it elsewhere (e.g. *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 96; biographers list a work entitled '*al-Qaḍā' wa-l-qadar*': al-Qifṭī, *Akhbār*, 192; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 3, 44; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 4, 255). Also, many manuscripts of the *Maṭālib* do not include it.

[35] *Tafsīr*, 9, 127. For detailed dating of various parts of this work, see Michel Lagarde, *Index*, 51–7.

[36] Cf. Jomier, "Mafātīḥ al-Ghayb", 253–90; "Qur'ānic Commentary", 467; Lagarde, *Index*, 57 ff.

[37] Al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 4, 258.

whereas book 8 seems to be unfinished and is undated.[38] Yet the latter date is puzzling, since *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā* (below) is dated earlier, but refers to discussions in books 3 and 4 of the *Maṭālib*. One explanation is that books 3–7 were written in 603/1207, but were later revised in 605/1208–9. However, if this is the case, then why was the *Maṭālib* not finished before it was revised? The question is significant, since an earlier dating of the *Maṭālib* will give greater weight to *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*.

— *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*. This commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma* was apparently authored after the *Maṭālib*.[39]

— *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*. A short ethical work finished in 604/1208. For its exceptional interest, a critical edition of this text is included in the appendix, and the work is examined in detail in Chapter IV below.

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[38] Dates are given at the end of each book. Book 3 is not dated in the printed edition, yet the author's colophon in MS Chester Beatty Ar 3114 (fol. 147a) dates it to 605/1208.

[39] The *Maṭālib* is mentioned in *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 100. The discussion referred to appears in book 7 of the *Maṭālib*.

CHAPTER ONE

AL-RĀZĪ'S THEORY OF ACTION

The Historical Background

Al-Rāzī's earliest, strictly Ashʿarī *kalām* works will form the ideal starting point for exploring both his classical Ashʿarī background and the direction in which his thought develops therefrom. Conveniently, a complete sketch of the various other positions and trends in his intellectual background is presented in his later works, where he will normally begin his enquiry into the nature of human action by outlining and scrutinising current and preceding opinions.

In *Uṣūl al-dīn*, al-Rāzī accepts the common *kalām* division of created existents into atoms and accidents, maintaining that human power (*qudra*), or capability (*istiṭāʿa*), is an accident that subsists in the atoms of the human body. He argues, as do previous Ashʿarīs, that power, being an accident, cannot endure for more than a single moment, the minimum discrete unit of time.[1] God directly creates the power to perform an act within man, as well as the act itself, which occurs at his bodily organs. He institutes and preserves the habitual order (*ʿāda*) of created things, such that certain types of human action follow uniformly from certain types of human power.[2]

At this early stage, al-Rāzī adheres to the classical Ashʿarī doctrine of acquisition (*kasb*), which attempts to establish a link (*taʿalluq*) between the power of the human agent and his acts, for the purpose of affirming responsibility and obligation. In Ashʿarī occasionalism, the causal link between the human agent and his acts is severed by the doctrine that only God's pre-eternal power (*qudra qadīma*) brings substances and accidents into existence, whereas human power, being temporally originated (*ḥāditha*), cannot produce any effects. Yet, in the doctrine of acquisition, man is said to 'acquire' the act that occurs

[1] *Uṣūl al-dīn,* fol. 220. Cf. Harry Wolfson, *Philosophy of the Kalam,* 522 ff.
[2] Cf. passage from the *Maḥṣūl*, p. 100 *infra.*

at his limbs by virtue of possessing the power that relates to it.[3]

The *mutakallimūn* debated whether power exists before the act, or simultaneously with it. In the atomist physics of classical *kalām*, if an immobile object is set into motion, it will be immobile at time t_1, and mobile at time $t_2 = t_1 + \Delta t$, where Δt is the smallest unit of time. Now, if the object is moved by a human being, will the human power involved in this change exist at t_1 or t_2? The Muʿtazila were almost unanimous on the former: the effect (motion) occurs immediately after the cause (human power). Man, thereby, produces his acts. By contrast, Ashʿarīs (including the early al-Rāzī) maintained that power and action are simultaneous (*al-istiṭāʿa maʿa l-fiʿl*).[4] Otherwise, if power exists at t_1, but not at t_2, when the act takes place, there will no longer be a cause to produce the effect—which, they argued, is inconceivable.

The same analysis of human action can be found in the *Muḥaṣṣal*, which al-Rāzī wrote at a fairly later stage:

> Power is an accident; so it does not last [for more than one moment]. If it precedes the act, it will be impossible [for the agent] to be capable of acting. For, at the moment that power exists, the act will be non-existent; and continual non-existence cannot possibly be an object of power (*maqdūr*). Moreover, at the moment action occurs, there will be no power.[5]

The classical *mutakallimūn* also debated whether a particular instance of human power may relate to opposite acts, or a single act only. Al-Rāzī writes in *Uṣūl al-dīn*:

> Temporally originated power relates to one object of power (*maqdūr*) [i.e. one act] only. According to the Muʿtazila, it relates to opposites. Moreover, according to most of them, it relates to different [objects of power], i.e. those that are not opposed. They say, "Temporally originated power relates to an infinite number of objects of power at successive moments".[6]

For Ashʿarīs, only one, specific act could follow from a specific instance of power. The accident of the power to move my arm will exist in my arm at the time of motion and will relate to that specific

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[3] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 231. On the doctrine of acquisition, see Daniel Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 69 ff.

[4] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 222; 225.

[5] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 253.

[6] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 227.

act only; it cannot relate to the omission of this movement, or to a different act. Contrarily, the Muʿtazila argue that this view leaves no room for free choice in the agent.

The early al-Rāzī also rejects the Muʿtazilī argument that the occurrence of the agent's act in accordance with his intention (*qaṣd*), or motive (*dāʿī*), proves that it is caused by it. This claim, he objects, is undermined by several lines of argument. For example, many an act will occur contrary to, or without, the agent's intention, such as the acts of the sleeper and the unaware. Moreover, if one accepts that God is the creator of human acts, the above Muʿtazilī contention will imply that God will be necessitated to create the human act in accordance with the human motive.[7] A precedent to al-Rāzī's rejection of the link between human action and motivation can already be found in al-Shahrastānī's (d. 547/1153) *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, which belongs to the classical Ashʿarī tradition.[8] We will return to this problem below.

The classical Ashʿarī theory reproduced in al-Rāzī's earliest works continues to be a major influence on him, although his later theory of human action will become highly eclectic. In later works, he provides a fuller account of other contemporary theories of action, elements of which he will incorporate. He lists the following four positions.[9]

(1) Al-Ashʿarī and most Ashʿarīs, including al-Bāqillānī and Ibn Fūrak (d. 404/1015), maintain that God is the only effecter (*mu'aththir*) of human action. Al-Rāzī notes that whereas al-Ashʿarī denies that human power has any effect in human action, al-Bāqillānī holds that the act's attribute of being obedience (*ṭāʿa*) or disobedience (*maʿṣiya*) depends on the human agent's power, though the act itself is created by God.[10]

(2) According to the Ashʿarī theologian, Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarā'īnī, human action is produced by the combination of divine power and human power. He reportedly argued that though human power, in contrast to divine power, cannot produce acts independently, it may "effect with assistance (*muʿīn*)". Therefore, when divine

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7 *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 203–4.

8 Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 80–3 (published as *Nihāyat al-iqdām*).

9 *Jabr*, 9–13; *Arbaʿīn*, 227–8; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 455; *Barāhīn*, 1, 216–7; *Tafsīr*, 4, 87–8.

10 Cf. al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 286. Cf. D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 92 ff.

power combines to human power, the latter becomes effective.[11]

(3) Another theory is that action occurs necessarily when power and motive combine in the agent. The majority of the *falāsifa*,[12] Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī the Muʿtazilī, and al-Juwaynī, are variably given as the main proponents of this view.[13] Al-Rāzī discusses whether the combination of power and motivation effects action, or only constitutes a condition for it. The latter view is supported by the *falāsifa*, who hold that the Originator of the world is a necessitating cause and that this combination produces preparedness (*istiʿdād*), which allows the Active Intellect to bring the act into being. It is also a view held by those who maintain that God is a voluntary agent, who directly creates power, motivation and action in humans, without any intermediation.[14] Al-Rāzī adds that he accepts the last view, though he will also attempt to synthesise both positions.

(4) Most Muʿtazilīs maintain that humans act with autonomy (*istiqlāl*) and choice (*ikhtiyār*), arguing that this is known through reflection (*naẓar*), or inference (*istidlāl*). However, according to Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī and his school-member Maḥmūd Ibn al-Malāḥimī al-Khuwārizmī (d. 536/1141), we have immediate (*ḍarūrī*) knowledge that we produce our acts.[15] Al-Rāzī objects that this contention contradicts Abū l-Ḥusayn's view that human action is determined by the combination of power and motive. He writes:

> I am extremely puzzled by the way he upholds, simultaneously, both this view and the view that the act depends on (*mawqūf ʿalā*) the motive. [The latter] amounts to an extreme determinism (*ghuluww fī l-jabr*); so how would he reconcile with it such an extreme qadarism![16]

According to this division, human action is brought into being by divine power alone, human power alone, the combination of both, or by divine power, with the combination of human power and motivation as a precondition. In what follows, we will see how each theory, to the exception of al-Isfarāʾīnī's, contributes to shaping al-Rāzī's

[11] Cf. al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 87; D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 118–9. According to al-Ījī (*Mawāqif*, 8, 147), this accords with al-Isfarāʾīnī's view that one effect can be the product of two separate causes.

[12] Cf. Salmān al-Budūr, "*Naẓariyyat Ibn Sīnā fī l-fiʿl*", 65 ff.

[13] In *Tafsīr*, 4, 88, al-Juwaynī's work *al-ʿAqīda al-Niẓāmiyya* is specified.

[14] *Jabr*, 11–2.

[15] *Jabr*, 12; *Arbaʿīn*, 228.

[16] *Arbaʿīn*, 228. cf. *Jabr*, 228; *Barāhīn*, 1, 216–7.

later theory of action, which he develops as he emerges gradually from his classical Ashʿarism towards a highly eclectic stance.

The Theory of Human Action

Al-Rāzī's later theory of human action has two main salient themes. On the one hand, it has a concern in cosmogony, specifically in the question of whether human acts come into being by human or divine power, this being the cardinal problem in classical *kalām* discussions of human action. The so-called problem of 'the creation of acts' (*khalq al-afʿāl*) will be examined briefly in the last section of the present chapter. On the other hand, al-Rāzī's theory of action has a psychological concern (more pertinent to his ethics), primarily with respect to the nature and mechanism of human choice and motivation. Related to this is the question of whether the human agent is determined (*mujbar*), or has free choice (*mukhtār*).

The most important of al-Rāzī's later discussions of human action can be found in the *Arbaʿīn*, the *Maʿālim*, the *Tafsīr* and, most importantly, the *Maṭālib*.[17] He also dedicates *Kitāb al-Jabr wa-l-qadar* to discussing destiny and human choice.

All these discussions revolve around a simple, key contention that is central to al-Rāzī's later theory of human action: that action is produced when human power and motivation combine. Once this combination occurs, it will act as a natural cause, which necessitates its effect. In what follows, the two elements will be examined separately.

Power

Debate over the nature of human power (*qudra*) has a long history before al-Rāzī. The Muʿtazila differed on whether human capability is mere health (*ṣiḥḥa*) and bodily fitness (*salāma*), or an extra accident that subsists in the atoms of the human body.[18] Classical Ashʿarīs took the latter view. Al-Ashʿarī maintained that "health is the soundness of constitution, fitness is the absence of defects and

[17] *Arbaʿīn*, 122–54; 227–46; *Maʿālim*, 78–85; *Maṭālib*, 3, 9–73.
[18] Al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 229; Abū Rashīd, *Masāʾil*, 241 ff.

obstructions, and power is an aspect that is additional to that",[19] and that "capability is the same as power, and is an accident that cannot subsist by itself, [but] subsists in the live atom (*jawhar ḥayy*)".[20] Accordingly, the difference between the healthy person and the disabled one is the existence of the attribute of power in the former and its absence in the latter.

In his later works, most notably the *Maʿālim*, al-Rāzī rejects this common Ashʿarī notion, that human power is an accident, directing his criticism at al-Ashʿarī specifically. Human power, he will argue, is not an accident that necessarily precedes a particular act, but is the fitness of the physical organs and the balance of the humours.[21]

As to whether a particular instant of power may produce only one act, or different types of action, he writes:

> Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī says that power does not relate to opposites. In my view, if ['power'] refers to the balance of humours and the fitness of organs, it will relate to both performance and omission—this is known immediately. However, if it means that unless a decisive and preponderating motive combines to power, it will not produce the effect, and that when this combination occurs it will not relate to opposites, then this indeed is true.[22]

These two interpretations of the statement—neither of which is intended by al-Ashʿarī—follow from al-Rāzī's abandoning the definition of power as an accident. Though, by 'power', he normally refers to the balance of the humours and physical fitness, he also uses the term in the second sense above, i.e. as referring to active power, which is the combination of potential power and motivation. As such, al-Rāzī will preserve the traditional Ashʿarī doctrinal formula, "Capability relates to one act only", often presenting it as the accepted Sunni position, despite his untraditional re-interpretation thereof.

Also in the *Maʿālim*, he cites al-Ashʿarī's view, related to his definition of power, that capability is simultaneous with action.[23] Power, defined as physical fitness and balance in humours, is not an accident that appears in the body at one moment and disappears at its end.

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[19] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 117.
[20] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 107.
[21] *Maʿālim*, 81–2; cf. *Jabr*, 40.
[22] *Maʿālim*, 83–4.
[23] *Maʿālim*, 83.

Rather, it may exist continuously, before, during and after the act, though it acts as a cause only when it combines with motivation.

The act, therefore, is produced by the combination of power and motivation, rather than the mere presence of power. When this combination occurs a 'complete cause' (*mu'aththir tāmm*) emerges, which produces the effect at exactly the same instant.[24] Al-Rāzī concludes that if 'capability' denotes power, it will indeed exist before action; however, if it denotes the combination of power and motive, it will be simultaneous with (*ʿinda*) action. As such, he affirms the traditional Ashʿarī formula, 'Capability and action occur simultaneously'.

Al-Rāzī's analysis of human action is in agreement with the classical Ashʿarī stance with respect to its atomism and occasionalism, though, essentially, it constitutes a very different theory. On the other hand, it is mainly on account of its atomism and occasionalism that al-Rāzī's analysis of action contrasts with that of Ibn Sīnā, with which it is otherwise in general agreement. In the *Mabāḥith*, Ibn Sīnā, for whom time is a continuum, is cited criticising those who claim "that power is simultaneous with action": they will have to accept that "someone who is seated is incapable of standing up (i.e. it is not possible, in his constitution, for him to stand up), unless he does stand up; so how could he stand up!"[25] In response, al-Rāzī argues that potentiality (*quwwa*) is 'the principle of change' and exists simultaneously with the change it effects, whereas power is only a constituent of potentiality and exists before the act. He adds, "If it is possible to interpret the claims of those people in the way we explain, what need is there to attack them and to deride their claims!"[26] Again, however, al-Rāzī must be aware that he does not merely introduce an 'interpretation' of the Ashʿarī claim, but a fundamentally different theory.

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[24] *Maʿālim*, 83.

[25] Ibn Sīnā (*Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 1, 176–7) attributes this view to "some ancients, including Ghārīqwā (*sic.*)" and "some people who came very long after him", probably in reference to Ashʿarīs. The reference to the 4th–3rd century BC Megarian school (Ghārīqūn) is taken from Aristotle's *Metaphysics* (IX.3). Ibn Rushd (*Tafsīr mā baʿd al-ṭabīʿa*, 2, 1124–6) comments: "Nowadays, among [the followers of] our religion, this view is upheld by the Ashʿarīs, and it is a view that contradicts human nature, with respect to both beliefs and acts". (See "Megarian School", *REP*).

[26] *Mabāḥith*, 1, 382–3; cf. *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 159b–160a; Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 1, 176–7.

Motivation

According to al-Rāzī, the production of human action requires the combination of power and a preponderator (*murajjiḥ*); power, on its own, is passive potentiality that will produce an effect only when prompted by an external factor.[27] Since human acts are contingent, and since a nonexistent contingent will require a cause for its existence to preponderate (*tarajjaḥa*) over its non-existence, the occurrence of the act will be inconceivable without such a cause, and necessitated by it. Al-Rāzī rejects the view that the cause will merely make acting more probable (*awlā*) than omission; for the two probabilities will be either equivalent, in which case no change will occur, or not equivalent, in which case the preponderant possibility will prevail.[28] As soon as acting preponderates, the act will occur instantly.[29] Al-Rāzī summarises the argument in the *Mulakhkhaṣ*:

> *On that the Acts of Servants are* [*Subject to*] *Divine Determination*. Human capability either has the potentiality to produce opposite [acts], or not. The latter [view] amounts to the affirmation of compulsion (*jabr*).
>
> In the former [view], the production of one of the two [possible] objects of power (*maqdūr*) from [human capacity], to the exclusion of the other, will either depend on a preponderator, or not. [If not,] it would follow that one of the two possible alternatives preponderates over the other without a preponderator.
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> [If acting depends on a preponderator,] that preponderator will be produced by either the servant (and the above disjunction will re-apply), or God. Then, the production of that effect, when that preponderator occurs, is either necessary, or not. The latter is inconceivable; for otherwise [the effect] would leave the state of equivalence, without reaching the state of necessitation—which we have refuted elsewhere. The former amounts to compulsion.[30]

Al-Rāzī repeatedly argues that to deny the principle of preponderation will be tantamount to denying the existence of the Creator, which is proven mainly on the basis of this principle.[31]

The preponderator in question is identified as will (*irāda*, *mashī'a*), which acts as a decisive will (*irāda jāzima*), or inclination (*mayl jāzim*),

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[27] *Mabāḥith*, 1, 383; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 160a.
[28] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 516–7; cf. *Jabr*, 33–4.
[29] *Jabr*, 24.
[30] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 349b.
[31] *Jabr*, 16; 22; cf. *Tafsīr*, 13, 187.

since it will necessitate its effect.[32] This will originates from a final cause within the agent, which is his intention, or objective. Al-Rāzī writes, commenting on Ibn Sīnā:

> How excellent is the Shaykh's saying that the final cause is an active cause for the causality of the active cause (*al-ʿilla al-ghāʾiyya ʿilla fāʿiliyya li-ʿilliyyat al-ʿilla al-fāʿiliyya*)! For the living being may be able to move right or left. Therefore, before the preponderance of one over the other, it will be an agent in potentiality. If it imagines benefit in either of the two movements, that imagination will become an efficient cause for that potentiality becoming an actual cause for one of the two movements.[33]

In al-Rāzī's later works, the notion of 'motive' (*dāʿī, dāʿiya*) becomes central to his discussions of human action; and he devotes a lengthy section to this topic in the *Maṭālib*.[34] This marks the extent of his departure under Muʿtazilī and *falsafī* influence from his early Ashʿarī stance in *Uṣūl al-dīn*, where, as we saw, he categorically rejects the Muʿtazilī notion that motivation plays a role in action.

Al-Rāzī defines 'motive' as "the presence, in the agent, of the knowledge, conviction (or belief, *iʿtiqād*) or presumption (*ẓann*) that he has a preponderant advantage (*maṣlaḥa rājiḥa*) in performing a particular act, which thereby brings about, in the agent's heart, a decisive inclination to perform that particular act".[35] Conversely, a 'motive' can be the knowledge, conviction or presumption that the agent has a preponderant disadvantage (*mafsada*) in an act, resulting in a decisive aversion (*nafra*) from performing it. The latter type is also termed 'deterrent' (*ṣārif*).[36]

Knowledge, al-Rāzī maintains, is a stronger motive than belief, since the latter, no matter how firm, will always remain liable to doubt.[37] Although belief on the basis of uncritical imitation (*taqlīd*) will often constitute a stronger motivation in some agents than knowledge in others, this is due to the interference of other motives, such as

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[32] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 517–8; 3, 13; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 257; *Jabr*, 25; 41.

[33] *Lubāb*, 85–6; cf. *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 1, 192–4; Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ishārāt*, 3, 30–1.

[34] *Maṭālib*, 3, 7–73. ʿAbd al-Jabbār previously dedicated a book to the subject of motivation, which is not known to have survived (see Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 510).

[35] *Maṭālib*, 3, 9.

[36] *Maṭālib*, 3, 13.

[37] *Maṭālib*, 3, 14–6.

habit, social custom, and an agent's expectation of praise or benefit in consequence to his acts. Also, each of these three types of cognitive states (knowledge, belief and presumption) includes motives that vary widely in strength; hence, the presumption that relies on a single informant's account of an event generally constitutes a weaker motive than that which relies on multiple accounts, which, in turn, constitutes a weaker motive than witnessing the event oneself.

Al-Rāzī distinguishes between 'objective' (*gharaḍ*), which is the final cause of an act, i.e. the desired benefit itself, and 'motive', which is the knowledge or belief that relates to it.[38] This is expanded upon in a section in the *Maṭālib* entitled, "That nothing but conviction and presumption (*sic.*) has an effect in motivating action", where he addresses some widespread notions.[39] For instance, it is said that one's motive for performing an act is its being beneficial (*manfa'a*) and advantageous (*maṣlaḥa*) in itself, while the motive for omitting an act is its being harmful (*maḍarra*) and disadvantageous (*mafsada*) in itself. Such statements, he argues, should be treated as metaphorical.

> The act's being beneficial and good is never a cause for the agent's performance thereof. Rather, what effects agency (*fā'iliyya*) is the agent's knowledge that the act in question involves such goodness and benefit.[40]

Similarly, it is not God's promise and threat as such that motivate a believer's acts, but the knowledge of what afterlife advantages and disadvantages may follow in consequence.

So does knowledge, al-Rāzī asks, motivate action directly, or through the intermediation of will (*irāda*), or inclination (*mayl*) (aversion (*karāhiya, nafra*) in the case of a deterrent)?[41] According to the latter view, which he accepts, knowledge will still be the sole determinant of motivation, and may be referred to as the motive in this sense. This view will explain the process of preponderation between multiple convictions existing simultaneously in the mind, which produce only one will, or inclination, for action. Al-Rāzī gives the example of one who leaves his home to visit a friend, but then remembers that he has to attend to something important at home, in which case he will

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[38] *Maṭālib*, 3, 10.
[39] *Maṭālib*, 3, 17–8.
[40] *Maṭālib*, 3, 18.
[41] *Maṭālib*, 3, 19–20.

have two conflicting motives. If he finds himself convinced that the benefits that would follow from visiting the friend and returning home are equal, he will incline to neither choice of action and will remain in his place, undecided and lacking will to act. Then, if it 'occurs in his mind' (*waqaʿa fī khāṭirih*) that one of the two benefits preponderates over the other, he will move immediately in its direction.

According to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, a motive is the knowledge, conviction or presumption of what is either morally good in itself, or beneficial to the agent, though he accepts that most human action is directed towards the latter.[42] By contrast, al-Rāzī maintains that the consideration of personal benefit is the only ultimate basis for all human motivation. He argues that it is known immediately (*bi-l-ḍarūra*) that human nature (*ṭabʿ*, *fiṭra*) is undoubtedly inclined towards something that it finds desirable in itself, and repelled from something else that it finds undesirable in itself.[43] All other things are sought or avoided ultimately for the sake of one or both of these two things. He adds,

> If we then contemplate and return to ourselves, we will know that the thing that is sought in itself is one of two things, either pleasure (*ladhdha*) or joy (*surūr*), and that the thing that is avoided in itself is either pain or grief (*ghamm*). All that the occurrence of which leads to pleasure and joy is sought for the sake of another, whereas all that the occurrence of which leads to pain and grief is avoided because of another. The words 'good' (*khayr*) and 'advantage' (*maṣlaḥa*) refer to all that is sought, whether in itself or for the sake of another; while the words 'evil' (*sharr*) and 'disadvantage' (*mafsada*) refer to all that is avoided, whether in itself or because of another.[44]

Seeking pleasure and avoiding pain are the two simple, primal instincts which underlie all human motivation.

These two primal instincts constitute the rudimentary elements for the calculations involved in more complex motives, as follows. Harm in general, which is avoided in itself, is of three main types: (*a*) real harm, which is the immediate experience of pain, (*b*) the negation of benefit, and (*c*) the negation of what prevents harm (*dafʿ dāfiʿ al-ḍarar*). Benefit in general, which is sought for its own sake, is

[42] E.g. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 196.
[43] *Maṭālib*, 3, 21; *Jabr*, 41.
[44] *Maṭālib*, 3, 21–2; cf. *Nafs*, 19–20; *Maʿālim*, 86.

also of three types: (*a*) real benefit, which is the immediate experience of pleasure, (*b*) the prevention of harm, and (*c*) the prevention of what impedes benefit. Some of these constitute generally stronger motives than others; e.g. expecting harm is a stronger motive than expecting the negation of an equal benefit. Moreover, overall motives vary in strength according to whether they are based on knowledge, conviction or presumption.[45]

The agent's mind weighs the various advantages and disadvantages it conceives within an act. If the agent then believes that the act will be purely advantageous, he will be compellingly motivated (*mulja'*) to perform it, and will perform it by necessity. If he finds it purely disadvantageous, he will omit it.[46] However, if he believes that the act involves both advantageous and disadvantageous aspects, he will be compellingly motivated to perform or omit it, according to which of the two choices he conceives to be preponderant. If both are equal, he will abstain from acting (*tawaqquf*).[47]

All the motives and deterrents that influence the agent at a given situation will 'add up' and 'subtract' in an often complex calculation within the agent's mind. Equal conflicting motivational 'quantities' will, as it were, cancel each other out, leaving, as their end product, only a single 'quantity' that effects action. Al-Rāzī himself uses mathematical language to describe this process; he writes that if equivalent opposed motives cancel each other out, "the remaining quantity [lit. 'number' (*ʿadad zā'id*)] will remain as a pure (*khāliṣ*) motive for action."[48] Such calculative processes often involve multiple stages. Suppose that an agent, in a given situation, has to choose between more than one course of action, when he expects that each would

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[45] *Maṭālib*, 3, 23 ff.

[46] *Maṭālib*, 3, 25. Al-Rāzī's use of the term 'compelling motivation' (*iljā'*) comes directly from its use by Muʿtazilīs. ʿAbd al-Jabbār seems to borrow the term from Abū Hāshim al-Jubbā'ī, to denote the particular case of the intentional act, which the agent finds himself virtually forced to choose (*Mughnī*, 11, 395; 12, 128; cf. Richard Frank, "The Autonomy of the Human Agent in the Teaching of ʿAbd al-Ǧabbār", 340; D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 56 ff.). According to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, when the agent is subject to only one sufficiently strong motive, it will be impossible for him to act in any other way; as such, he will be 'compellingly motivated'. Muʿtazilīs, therefore, viewed compelling motivation as an extreme case, unrepresentative of human action in general. Al-Rāzī generalises it to include all human action.

[47] *Maṭālib*, 3, 26; *Jabr*, 22–33.

[48] *Maṭālib*, 3, 26.

lead to various advantages and disadvantages. His mind would first assess each possible course of action individually by 'calculating' the 'sums' of its expected advantages and disadvantages.[49] The second stage will be to find the final sum of the sums of all conceived courses of action, which then produces the will that motivates action.

It will be instructive to compare al-Rāzī's theory of motivation with its main influence, viz. the views of some previous Baṣran Muʿtazilīs. The most pertinent are ʿAbd al-Jabbār, Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, and Ibn al-Malāḥimī.[50]

According to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, the automatic process of 'adding up', described by al-Rāzī, does not take place. Rather, the agent may choose between separate motives that influence him at a given situation and that could only make some choices of action more preferable to him, or more likely to be performed (*awlā*). Yet, though motives, according to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, provide the agent with a sense of the various possible courses of action at a given situation, they are neither necessary for, nor effective in, his action.[51] Only when the agent has one sufficiently strong motive will he be compellingly motivated to act according to it.

Ibn al-Malāḥimī criticises ʿAbd al-Jabbār for the view that the agent may act without motivation, and asserts that the function of the motive is akin to that of physical organs, viz. it constitutes a necessary condition for the production of action by the efficient causality of power alone.[52] While motives make one act more likely (*awlā*) than another,[53] the agent may choose freely among his various motives. According to Ibn al-Malāḥimī, motives do not automatically produce a single will, or inclination, that then motivates the agent to act, as al-Rāzī maintains.[54] Rather, when confronted with a number of motives (which consist of knowledge, convictions or suppositions), the agent may choose a course of action according to one or more of them. Ibn al-Malāḥimī can thus plausibly contend that a motive

[49] E.g. *Maṭālib*, 3, 34–5.
[50] The influence of Abū l-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Malāḥimī on al-Rāzī is noted by Ibn al-Murtaḍā (*Ṭabaqāt*, 119).
[51] Cf. R. Frank, "Autonomy of the Human Agent", 341–3.
[52] Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 510–4.
[53] Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 514.
[54] Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 240 ff.

makes the occurrence of an act *more likely* than others, but does not necessarily determine it.

Al-Rāzī points out a crucial difference between the theories of action of Ibn al-Malāḥimī and his master Abū l-Ḥusayn: the latter holds that "the act depends (*mawqūf*) on the motive", whereas the former holds that the motive does not necessitate the act, but makes it more likely to occur.[55] However, it seems that Abū l-Ḥusayn does not state explicitly that the motive necessitates the act, as al-Rāzī criticises him for shying away from admitting this obvious implication to his position. One may wonder here whether there was indeed such a disagreement between Abū l-Ḥusayn and Ibn al-Malāḥimī, as al-Rāzī claims.[56] In his work *al-Muʿtamad fī uṣūl al-dīn*, Ibn al-Malāḥimī does not seem to refer to this point of divergence with Abū l-Ḥusayn; yet he does point out another relevant disagreement with him of which al-Rāzī too is aware, viz. that Abū l-Ḥusayn affirms the role of will in human action. Will, according to him, is produced by motives; for "when man knows that a thing contains a preponderant benefit, he will find that his self seeks it, and he will find this seeking (*ṭalab*) to be as though produced by this knowledge and following from it".[57] The immediate motive for action becomes will, or 'inclination in the heart' (*mayl al-qalb*).[58] Therefore, since Abū l-Ḥusayn maintains that action presupposes the presence of motivation and that the presence of a single motive in the agent at a given moment will compel him to act in accordance with it, it should follow (though Abū l-Ḥusayn appears not to admit this) that the emergence of a single will from multiple partial motives will constitute a decisive will. Al-Rāzī argues that Abū l-Ḥusayn will have to admit that motivation necessitates action. As such, he may appear justified in accusing him of inconsistency.[59]

In the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī includes a section on this view, which he attributes to Abū l-Ḥusayn, entitled "On whether the production of

[55] *Jabr*, 12–3; *Arbaʿīn*, 228.

[56] According to Wilferd Madelung ("Late Muʿtazila", 254), it is unlikely that Ibn al-Malāḥimī modifies his master's theory fundamentally.

[57] Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 240–1; al-Rāzī mentions the views of both authors in *Nihāya*, fol. 125a.

[58] Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 251.

[59] On Abū l-Ḥusayn's theory of action, cf. Madelung, "Late Muʿtazila", 250–6; and, recently, Martin McDermott, "Abu'l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī on God's Volition".

action depends (*tawaqqafa*) on motivation or not", and another on that the production of the act requires a motive.[60] The conclusion of the two sections is that the act occurs if, and only if, its motive occurs. He then includes another section entitled "On demonstrating that, at the occurrence of motivation, the production of action becomes necessary, and that no probability remains whatsoever", which is directed against those who claim that "when motivation occurs, the production of action becomes more likely, but does not reach the level of necessitation",[61] viz. Ibn al-Malāḥimī.[62]

Al-Rāzī, therefore, maintains that motivation is not only necessary for action, it necessitates action. He addresses some objections based on observations of apparently unmotivated acts. With respect to unconscious action, he argues that the act will not occur unless the agent intends (*qaṣada*) it.[63] The seemingly purposeless act of moving one's finger while engrossed in deep thought is in fact purposeful, since it will involve a slight, though often unconscious, benefit or negation of harm. For instance, the constant immobility of the finger may cause tedium, or the movement may be habitual, in which case immobility will cause unease. Even in the total unconsciousness of sleep, the sleeper may have imaginations which motivate him to do some acts, such as turning from side to side and talking. These imaginations may be dreams, or may be produced by physical pains, resulting, e.g. by prolonged sleep on one side. Similar explanations of the action of the sleeper are advanced by Ibn al-Malāḥimī in his objections to ʿAbd al-Jabbār's contention that man may act without motivation, and by Ibn Sīnā in his refutation of Muʿtazilī views on autonomous human choice.[64] Al-Rāzī accepts Ibn Sīnā's distinction between imagination and the agent's awareness of that imagination and his remembering it.[65] It is possible, therefore, that the agent acts according to an unconscious motive, or a conscious motive that he later forgets.

[60] *Maṭālib*, 3, 37–43; 3, 45–53.
[61] *Maṭālib*, 3, 55–60.
[62] *Arbaʿīn*, 228.
[63] *Maṭālib*, 3, 42.
[64] Cf. Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 510-4; Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Qaḍā' wa-l-Qadar*, 55; Madelung, "Late Muʿtazila", 251.
[65] *Maṭālib*, 3, 42–3; *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 1, 188–9; *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 43; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 186a; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 2, 460.

Also, many Muʿtazilīs, including ʿAbd al-Jabbār, will define vain action as unmotivated action.[66] Yet, following a common *falsafī* view, al-Rāzī defines vain action (*ʿabath*), not as unmotivated action, but as non-rational action, which is motivated by the imagination, and is often unconscious and related to trivial ends.[67] Hence, the section in the *Mabāḥith* entitled, "On demonstrating that there must be an end (*ghāya*) for vain and fortuitous (*juzāf*) [action]".[68]

Al-Rāzī also comments on the phenomenon of hesitation (*taraddud*), which the Muʿtazila cite as a sign that the agent has free choice. They claim, he writes, that obligation (*taklīf*) is inconceivable when the agent is compellingly motivated, and conceivable only when he is hesitant among a number of conflicting motives (*mutaraddid al-dawāʿī ilā l-fiʿl wa-l-tark*).[69] He responds by arguing that hesitation is due to the complexity of mental processes. Motives are in constant and subtle motion in the agent's heart, since convictions are momentary and "quick to disappear and alter".[70]

> Natural causes are constant, continuous and unchanging. The cause of heating remains forever characterised by that property by which it produces heating, and never changes ... in contradistinction to voluntary (*ikhtiyārī*) acts. For that which produces movement leftwards[71] is a combination of power and the motive for leftward movement. These motives are quick to alter and change. Thus, if the motive to turn right occurs in the capable [agent]'s heart, that combination will produce rightward movement. Then that motive disappears quickly and is replaced by the motive for leftward movement. This combination now produces leftward movement.[72]

Hesitation, thus, occurs when the agent has a preponderant motive to perform a certain act at one instant, and a preponderant motive to abstain, or to perform a different act at the next instant, each

[66] In this sense, vain action will be inconceivable in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's theory of action (although he does use the term), given his insistence on the impossibility of unmotivated action (cf. Madelung, "Late Muʿtazila", 253), unless he defines vain action as action that accords, not with the most preponderant (*awlā*) motive the agent has, but with a much weaker one.

[67] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 1, 188–9; *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 41–3; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Taʿlīqāt*, 83; 141; *Ishārāt*, 2, 459.

[68] *Mabāḥith*, 1, 535–7; cf. *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 42–3.

[69] *Maṭālib*, 3, 26–8.

[70] *Maṭālib*, 3, 27; cf. 3, 31–2.

[71] Reading '*yusrā*' instead of '*yumnā*'.

[72] *Jabr*, 26; cf. *Maṭālib*, 3, 27–8.

constituting a compelling motive. People call one who is generally hesitant and undecided '*dhū badawāt*', since, at one moment, a certain act will seem (*badā*) to him to be of preponderant benefit, while, at another moment, he will conceive another act to be so; this indecision may be due to his nature. Also, the agent may perceive something that may remind him of, or invoke in him, a certain knowledge or conviction that motivates him, whereas perceiving something else, one moment later, may invoke a different conviction in his mind.[73] "Considerations of benefit and harm are many and virtually countless; the greater the mind's reckoning of them, the greater the perplexity and confusion".[74]

Destiny

Al-Rāzī presents various arguments against Muʿtazilī claims of free human choice, one of the most important of which goes as follows. The combination of power and motivation either necessitates, or does not necessitate, the act. The former possibility will lead to a type of determinism (*jabr*), since the agent's motives cannot rely on other motives *ad infinitum*, but should ultimately originate from motives that God creates. Al-Rāzī then continues with an argument *ad hominem*, viz. that the latter possibility will entail that when power and motivation combine, action may or may not follow. In other words, if we imagine that a given situation involving an agent, who has to make a choice, is repeated a number of absolutely identical times, the choice that the agent makes will follow sometimes, but not at all times; i.e. it will occur randomly, "by pure chance and for no reason". This would result in another type of determinism, whereby human action is determined by pure chance.[75]

Having demonstrated that the combination of motivation and power determines the act, al-Rāzī discusses the only preceding stage in the production of human action, viz. the emergence of motivation from cognitive states. By arguing that both stages are deterministic, he proves that human action as a whole is determined. He writes:

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[73] *Jabr*, 43.
[74] *Maṭālib*, 3, 28.
[75] *Jabr*, 13–4.

> Man finds in himself that unless he wants to act he will not be able to act, and unless he wills to abstain he will not be able to abstain. That will is not due to another will; for, otherwise, this would entail infinite regress. It is thus certain that those wills go back to a necessary will that occurs in the heart without will. And if that decisive will occurs in the heart, the occurrence of the act will undoubtedly be necessary. Therefore, neither the occurrence of will in the heart is of the person's [own doing], nor is the occurrence of the act after the occurrence of will in his heart of the person's [own doing]. All is thus from God. And man is compelled under the guise of a voluntary agent.[76]

In one place in the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī is confronted with the question of what determines the motive, i.e. what makes a particular motive at one moment preponderant over other motives.[77] He responds that God brings motives into being; and it is thus His will that makes one motive preponderant over others. Elsewhere, he qualifies this by dividing motives that appear in the agent into motives that the agent himself causes to occur (*bi-īqāʿ al-ʿabd*), and motives that God initiates (*ibtidāʾan*) in his heart.[78] The former type is possible when the agent wants to remove a particular motive, or inclination, from his heart, and then strives to do so. If anyone examines himself, he will find in himself this ability to change or eliminate motives—al-Rāzī treats this as an indisputable, self-evident truth. Motives that are brought into being in the heart immediately by God include motives that motivate the agent to change other motives; otherwise, if the appearance or change of each motive required another motive, the chain of motives would continue *ad infinitum*.

Al-Rāzī also argues that motives stem from the agent's cognitive states, which are determined by both internal and external factors.[79]

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[76] *Manāqib al-Imām al-Shāfiʿī*, 122.

[77] *Jabr*, 28–9.

[78] *Maṭālib*, 3, 61–2. Cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 127: "Inclinations and desires go back to an inclination and a motivation that occurs in the heart, either by God's creation or by a heavenly cause (*sabab samāwī*)". A thirsty person's choice between two identical glasses of water placed in front of him relies on these heavenly causes (*mustanid ilā l-asbāb al-falakiyya*).

The devil may also play a role in human motivation, by reminding the agent of the pleasures associated with a particular disobedience that he is otherwise forgetful of. An angel may remind him of the happiness associated with a particular obedience. Both, however, depend on the psychological preparedness of the agent for such influences (*Maṭālib*, 7, 329–31).

[79] *Jabr*, 35–46.

The main internal ones are: *(a)* variations in the essences of human souls;[80] *(b)* variations in temperance; and *(c)* physiognomic variations. The three main external factors are: *(d)* habituation; *(e)* the expectation of certain benefits or harms from adhering to certain beliefs; and *(f)* theoretical training. These six factors will determine the agent's character, while accidental (*ittifāqī*) external circumstances, perceived through the senses, will act as more direct factors in the production of motives.[81] All these are factors that the agent will have no control over.

In *Kitāb al-Jabr*, we find a lengthy section containing proofs for the view that man has no power whatsoever over the contents of his knowledge.[82] Even religious belief and disbelief are products, not of the agent's choice, but purely of God's creative power. A number of arguments are advanced.

It is first argued that all acquired (*muktasab*) knowledge will depend on self-evident (*badīhī*) knowledge that the mind knows immediately and spontaneously, not by choice. So, at a given moment, 'all that is necessary' for self-evident knowledge to entail acquired knowledge either exists within the agent, or does not exist. If it exists, that acquired knowledge will come into being immediately, not by choice. If not 'all that is necessary' exists, something will still be needed for the appearance of acquired knowledge. That 'something' cannot be self-evident knowledge (which is already assumed). Nor can it be acquired knowledge, in the case of the first bit of acquired knowledge. Al-Rāzī seems to imply that it can only be divine, rather than human, will (since an agent's will depends on his knowledge). It follows, he concludes, that self-evident knowledge is not produced by human will, nor are the first, second and following bits of acquired knowledge.

Al-Rāzī's second proof is as follows. Knowledge is either conception (*taṣawwur*) or assertion (*taṣdīq*), the former being apprehension (*idrāk*) without judgement (*ḥukm*), and the latter being, according to al-Rāzī, apprehension with a judgement of fact. He first argues that conceptions are not acquired. For if I try to acquire a conception, I will either have awareness (*shu'ūr*) of the essence to be conceptualised,

[80] This is discussed p. 118–20 *infra*.
[81] *Jabr*, 43–4.
[82] *Jabr*, 101–10; cf. *Arba'īn*, 235–7; *Tafsīr*, 24, 179.

or not. If I have awareness, I will already have conceptualised it. If not, my mind will be heedless of it, and thus cannot seek it. If it is objected that the mind may be aware of only some aspects of the essence, but not of it completely, the same argument will apply, though 'awareness of essence' will be substituted with 'awareness of the unknown aspect of the essence'.

Al-Rāzī also argues that if we examine ourselves, we will find that conceptions have to be: *(a)* derived from sense perception, or *(b)* based on self-evident conceptions, such as our knowledge of pleasure and pain, or *(c)* constructed by the mind or the imagination from the first two types, which are not acquired. Conceiving something beyond these will be impossible. Therefore, conceptions cannot be acquired.[83]

Having demonstrated that conceptions are not acquired, al-Rāzī proceeds to prove that no knowledge of assertion can be acquired.[84] Each statement of assertion, he argues, will require two conceptions, viz. of subject and predicate. Now, the presence of these elements in the mind is either sufficient to produce an assertion, which will thus be self-evident (such as knowing the concepts of 'one' and 'half of two'); or not, in which case the resultant assertion will be discursive (*naẓarī*) knowledge (such as knowing the concepts of 'world' and 'temporal'; since the presence of both in the mind is insufficient for concluding that 'the world is temporal'). In the latter case, if all that is necessary, for self-evident knowledge to entail some discursive knowledge, is present in the mind, that discursive knowledge will follow necessarily, not by choice. The argument then continues along the same lines as the first proof.

Al-Rāzī provides three more proofs in support of his contention "that all the knowledge and ignorance that occur in people's hearts and minds are from God, and are brought into being by God".[85] In showing that the agent has no control over, or choice of, his knowledge, al-Rāzī covers all parts of the theory of human action in affirmation of absolute determinism: the acquisition of knowledge, the emergence of motivation from knowledge, and the emergence of

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[83] *Jabr*, 105.
[84] *Jabr*, 105–7.
[85] *Jabr*, 108.

action from the combination of motivation and power.[86] For 'Abd al-Jabbār, by contrast, knowledge that derives from reflection (*naẓar*) is generally not determined.[87]

Having argued for the determination of human acts on largely logical and metaphysical grounds, al-Rāzī is faced with the accusation that he treats human motives as natural causes. He replies that motives are distinct in two main ways. First, natural causes are continuous and uniform, whereas voluntary acts are in constant motion and change, and their effects are thus not uniform or always predictable.[88] Second, natural causes do not have awareness, knowledge or comprehension of their effects, unlike voluntary agents who are aware of their acts and whose knowledge of a possible, prospective act may itself be part of the cause that produces it. We, therefore, describe the act as being 'voluntary' (*ikhtiyārī*), and the agent as being a 'voluntary' agent (*mukhtār*), because the act will occur only when the agent conceives it as being good (*khayr*). This etymological analysis removes the emphasis in the word '*ikhtiyār*' from 'choosing', or 'choice', to the other related sense of the root *kh-y-r*, viz. 'finding something to be good or better than others'.[89]

Hence, for instance, to the objection, "If man were destined, sending prophets, obligating men by commands and prohibitions, and afterlife punishment and reward would all be pointless", he responds that both people's obedience and disobedience to divine command and their afterlife consequences are included in destiny. There is no end to, or culmination of, destiny, at which point the injustices of this world are resolved, and justice (as conceived by the Mu'tazila) is served. Rather, as one may be destined to have a bad day today and another bad day tomorrow, which will only add to the badness of today, let alone compensate for it, one may be destined to have an infinite number of bad days in the afterlife.

In their criticism of such a deterministic view the Mu'tazila had

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86 Cf. *Muḥaṣṣal*, 136–7; *Arba'īn*, 330–2.

87 See D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 48 ff.; Madelung, "Late Mu'tazila", 246.

88 *Jabr*, 26; cf. p. 28 *supra*. This same point is made by Ibn Sīnā; cf. S. al-Budūr, "*Naẓariyyat Ibn Sīnā fī l-fi'l*", 67.

89 Cf. *Lawāmi'*, 360; *Maṭālib*, 7, 329. Ibn Sīnā (*Ta'līqāt*, 52–3) gives a similar distinction between natural causes and voluntary ones, and adds that human acts will not be voluntary in reality.

yet another strong objection, which they based on analogy (*qiyās*), or 'judging the unobservable in accordance with the observable' (*radd al-ghā'ib ilā l-shāhid*). If human action occurs only with the combination of power and motivation, the same should be true in the case of divine action. Consequently, if all that is required for God's agency (*fā'iliyya*) existed from pre-eternity, the world would have been pre-eternal. Otherwise, if not all that is required for God's agency existed from pre-eternity, some of that would have come into being at some point. That would have required yet another cause for it to come into being; that cause would have required another cause; and the chain would continue *ad infinitum*. The argument concludes that al-Rāzī's determinism will have to apply universally, to both the 'observable' (*shāhid*) and the 'unobservable' (*ghā'ib*),[90] and will inevitably lead to the view that the world is eternal and that God is a necessitating cause (*'illa mūjiba*), rather than a voluntary agent. This, al-Rāzī states, is the strongest Mu'tazilī argument in this context.[91]

His immediate response is that rejecting determinism and affirming free human choice will lead to a more heinous consequence, viz. denying the very existence of the Creator. For that position will undermine the main proof for His existence, which is based on the contingency of this world and its need for a preponderator to bring it into being. However, al-Rāzī recognises that this counterargument is unsatisfactory and he promises to return to this topic later in *Kitāb al-Jabr* to elucidate the difference between the observable and the unobservable with respect to this issue.

Elsewhere in this work, he replies to the same objection by proposing a distinction between human will, which is temporally originated (*ḥādith*) and thus in need for an originator (*muḥdith*), and divine will, which is pre-eternal and uncaused.[92] But this does not solve the problem; for the Mu'tazila may argue that a pre-eternal divine will that is totally uncaused will necessitate a pre-eternal creation. I have not found other places in *Kitāb al-Jabr* where the main Mu'tazilī objection is addressed.

Indeed, this implication of the *falsafī* influence that al-Rāzī intro-

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[90] The 'observable world' (*'ālam al-shahāda*)—in contrast to 'the unobservable world' (*'ālam al-ghayb*)—al-Rāzī writes, is "all that relates to bodies and bodily things ...; for one observes these things with one's sight" (*Tafsīr*, 1, 275).

[91] *Jabr*, 15–6; *Arba'īn*, 230. Cf. D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 149–51.

[92] *Jabr*, 27; cf. *Arba'īn*, 230.

duces into his theory of action appears to be one of the places where his synthesis between *falsafa* and *kalām* proves most difficult,[93] especially that he had to face well-established criticisms of *falsafa*. However, in the *Maṭālib*, his last major work, he solves this problem, alongside other problems relating to divine action, by adopting a highly unusual stance, as follows.

In all works earlier than the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī affirms the common Sunni doctrine that will is a real attribute of divine essence that is distinct from the attributes of knowledge and power; and he locates divine choice (*ikhtiyār*) in this attribute.[94] Thus, the attribute of will 'consists' of both the ability to choose one of two possible options freely and the actual choices themselves. Al-Rāzī rejects the views of some Muʿtazilīs on divine will, such as the Baghdādīs[95] and Abū l-Ḥusayn l-Baṣrī, who argues that, unlike human will, which is real and produced by motives, 'divine will' refers to God's motives only, which are included in His knowledge.[96]

However, al-Rāzī defines 'will', in animate beings (i.e. in the 'observable'), in terms of the inclination (*mayl*) that follows naturally from motives, and he thereby excludes the notion of choice from it. As such, '*irāda*', as the mere natural product of motives, becomes decisive (*jāzima*), just as inclination is decisive (*mayl jāzim*), and totally contrary to free choice. Therefore, if our knowledge of the divine attribute of will depends on *qiyās*, whereby the unobservable is judged in accordance with the observable, a clear implication will follow. Al-Rāzī arrives at this in a section on the nature of will (*ḥaqīqat al-irāda*), in his discussion of divine attributes:

> All we know in the meaning of 'will' and 'aversion' (*karāhiya*) is the inclination of the natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*) to attaining benefits and its inclination to avoiding harms. Since this is inconceivable in relation to God, it will be inconceivable to affirm the notions of will and aversion to Him.[97]

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93 See Madelung, "Late Muʿtazila", 256–7.

94 *Ishāra*, fol. 23b–24a; *Nihāya*, fol. 125a; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 391; *Khamsūn*, 47–8; *Arbaʿīn*, 147; *Maʿālim*, 54. On that the classical Ashʿarī notion of *irāda* includes choice, see e.g. al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 102.

95 *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 243; cf. al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 238 ff.

96 On Abū l-Ḥusayn's position, see also Ibn al-Malāḥimī, *Muʿtamad*, 240–1; 252.

97 *Maṭālib*, 3, 178. Hence, he does not list 'will' among God's positive attributes (*Maṭālib*, 3, 5).

God is not compellingly motivated (and, thereby, not a necessitating cause) because He does not have will, i.e. natural inclination (*mayl*), which follows from motivation. As we will see in the next chapter, al-Rāzī also maintains that God's acts are not motivated. Therefore, while Abū l-Ḥusayn considers 'divine will' to refer to nothing but God's motives, al-Rāzī denies that God has either will or motivation.

This highly unorthodox later position brings al-Rāzī into conflict with mainstream Sunni theology, which affirms a real and distinct divine attribute of will.[98] Yet it is an implication of his theory of action that he accepts sincerely, not simply for dialectical consumption to address what, he admits, is a strong Muʿtazilī argument. Strangely, by his denial of the divine attribute of will, al-Rāzī does not seem to locate divine choice in any other attribute, though he still affirms that God is a voluntary agent.

Having reached a consistent position as regards human and divine action, the charge of inconsistency he directs at Abū l-Ḥusayn becomes more tenable:

> Abū l-Ḥusayn was confused on [whether the production of action by power depends on motivation]. Whenever he discourses with the *falāsifa* on their saying, "Why did God single out a specific time, rather than a preceding or succeeding one, to create the world?" he says, "Action does not depend on motivation." Whenever he discourses with his companions on all other matters, he says, "Action depends on motivation, and preponderation without a preponderator is self-evidently inconceivable".[99]

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[98] Ibn Taymiyya (*Majmūʿ*, 13, 128; cf. 6, 245) writes, "Al-Rāzī discusses the problem of will in *al-Maṭālib al-ʿĀliya*, and chooses to deny [God's] will. For he was unable to answer the argument of the *falāsifa* using the principles of his companions of Jahmīs and Muʿtazilīs, so he ran off to their side!" Ibn Taymiyya also dedicates a work to refuting this position put forward in the *Maṭālib* (Ibn ʿAbd al-Hādī, *ʿUqūd*, 51).

[99] *Jabr*, 12. In a later episode of this debate, Ibn Taymiyya (*Minhāj*, 1, 111; cf. *Dar'*, 1, 326) adopts this argument, but directs it at al-Rāzī:

> Whenever ... al-Rāzī and his followers debate with Muʿtazilīs on matters of destiny, they ... hold that one of the objects of the capacity of the voluntary agent can preponderate only by a complete preponderator. Whenever they debate with the *falāsifa* on the questions of the creation of the world, the affirmation of God's choice and the refutation of [their notion of God being] a necessitating cause, they follow the route of Muʿtazilīs and Jahmīs in saying that one of the objects of the capacity of the voluntary agent may preponderate over the other without a preponderator.

In addition to the main argument from preponderance, al-Rāzī uses the traditional argument for predestination from God's pre-eternal knowledge of all events.[100] He treats this argument and that based on the theory of motivation as his two strongest in this regard.[101] One 'clever' Muʿtazilī even reportedly admitted that these two arguments are "the enemies of Muʿtazilism".[102] In *Kitāb al-Jabr*, both receive extensive scriptural backing, with evidence from the Qurʾān, the *ḥadīth* and the statements of companions and religious scholars.[103]

With the combination of these two main arguments, one primarily *falsafī*, the other commonly Sunnī, al-Rāzī concludes that man, though a voluntary agent in the sense of acting with awareness, is ultimately compelled. He writes, "Man is compelled under the guise of a voluntary agent" (*muḍṭarr fī ṣūrat mukhtār*);[104] "Man is compelled in his choosing" (*muḍṭarr fī ikhtiyārih*);[105] and "The acts of men occur by compulsion" (*wāqiʿa ʿalā sabīl al-iḍṭirār*).[106] He does not shy from affirming his determinism in the most explicit terms; e.g. he writes, "Affirming determinism is inescapable" (*al-qawl bi-l-jabr lāzim*); "There is nothing in existence but determination" (*mā fī l-wujūd illā l-jabr*); and "Man is compelled in his willing" (*majbūr ʿalā l-irāda*).[107]

It was almost unprecedented in Sunni theology that such an uncompromisingly bold and systematic determinism (*jabr*) be affirmed, given the problems it creates with respect to human responsibility and

Yet Ibn Taymiyya himself then relies on arguments similar to al-Rāzī's in criticising the position of Muʿtazilīs and Qadarīs on human free choice (*Darʾ*, 1, 329).

[100] *Arbaʿīn*, 343–4; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 471; *Maʿālim*, 89–90; *Jabr*, 46–65.

[101] See, e.g., *Jabr*, 341, where he speaks of *masʾalat al-dāʿī wa-masʾalat al-ʿilm*.

[102] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 471.

[103] *Jabr*, 113–389. Al-Rāzī clarifies his general methodology in dealing with scriptural evidence, and he is clear about their being generally less conclusive than rational evidence (*Jabr*, 113–118). To the objection that the Qurʾān contains verses that support both the view of the determination of acts and that of free choice, he states that God's speech includes both explicit truth (*ḥaqīqa*) and metaphor (*majāz*), and one should try to see the truth that lies behind the latter by interpretation (*taʾwīl*) (*Jabr*, 132–3).

[104] *Lawāmiʿ*, 242; *Tafsīr*, 24, 179; *Maṭālib*, 3, 60; *Jabr*, 25; 258; *Manāqib*, 122; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Taʿlīqāt*, 51; 53. Al-Rāzī (*Tafsīr*, 15, 64) also quotes this from a defence of predeterminism by al-Ghazālī (*Iḥyāʾ*, 4, 235).

[105] *Jabr*, 43; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 517; *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 389. Cf. al-Ghāzalī (*Iḥyāʾ*, 4, 6): "All is from God. Indeed even choice is from God. Man is compelled in the choosing that he has (*muḍṭarr fī l-ikhtiyār alladhī lahu*)". Al-Rāzī's statements left a strong impact on some later authors (e.g. al-Iṣfahānī, *Kāshif*, 4, 35–6; al-Taftazānī, *Sharḥ*, 4, 263).

[106] *Jabr*, 41.

[107] Respectively: *Jabr*, 43; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 217; *Khalq*, fol. 46a.

divine justice. According to al-Rāzī, such ethical problems should not detract from the truths of metaphysics. Nonetheless, he argues that Revelation does not call average believers to believe in an absolute determinism because of the detrimental effect it could have on their faith.[108]

Nevertheless, al-Rāzī often assumes a negative view of the designation 'determinists' (*mujbira, jabriyya*) and uses it polemically against Jahm Ibn Ṣafwān, Ḥusayn Ibn Muḥammad al-Najjār, Ḍirār Ibn 'Amr and others.[109] In some places, he distinguishes between different 'determinisms', of which he accepts one and rejects others.[110] Elsewhere, he argues that he is not a determinist, since he maintains that man acts in accordance with will (albeit it is ultimately determined), whereas determinism-proper is to hold that man acts not in accordance with his will.[111]

Despite his explicit determinism, al-Rāzī admits, in one place in the *Tafsīr*, one of his later works, that the question of human destiny and choice does not have an unproblematic and conclusive solution:

> There is a mystery (*sirr*) in [this issue]; viz. that proving the existence of God compels one to uphold determinism (*jabr*), ... while proving prophecy compels one to uphold [human] autonomy (*qudra*).[112] For if man does not act autonomously, what use is there in sending prophets and in revealing scriptures?
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> Indeed there is even yet another mystery here, which surpasses all; viz. that if we return to sound primordial nature and primary intellect (*al-ʿaql al-awwal*), we will find that when existence and non-existence are on a par in relation to something, neither will preponderate over the other without a preponderator—which leads to determinism. Yet we also find a self-evident distinction between voluntary movements and movements by compulsion, and a self-evident certitude in the goodness of praise and the badness of blame, and in command and prohibition; and this leads to the doctrine of the Muʿtazila.
>
> It is as though this question falls in the sphere of contradiction (*fī ḥayyiz al-taʿāruḍ*), in relation to both immediate and discursive knowledge, in relation to proclaiming the greatness (*taʿẓīm*) of God, with

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[108] Cf. p. 145 *infra*.

[109] *Iʿtiqādāt*, 103–6.

[110] E.g. he responds to Muʿtazilīs: "If you mean, by 'determinism', 'the necessary entailment of the act from the occurrence of motivation and the non-occurrence of deterrents', then ... this is our position" (*Nihāya*, fol. 227a).

[111] *Manāqib*, 127.

[112] Al-Rāzī sometimes uses '*qudra*' in the Muʿtazilī sense to denote both the agent's choice and his power.

> reference to His power and wisdom, in relation to upholding divine unity and deanthropomorphism (*tanzīh*), and in relation to scriptural proofs. ... The question is thus difficult and obscure. We pray God guide us to truth![113]

Elsewhere, al-Rāzī writes that when no solution for a problem seems to preponderate, "we will leave [that problem] captive 'in the sphere of contradiction' (*fī ḥayyiz al-taʿāruḍ*)", i.e. by suspending judgement.[114] It seems that in the above passage from the *Tafsīr*, al-Rāzī contemplated taking a sceptical stance on this problem, which (as we will see in the last chapter of the present study) could have stemmed from a wider scepticism that appears in his later works.

The Theme of the Creation of Human Acts

We shall now turn briefly to the question of the causality that underlies the human act, i.e. whether the act is produced by human or divine power—this being the essence of the early *kalām* problem of the 'creation of human acts' (*khalq al-afʿāl*). To maintain that human power effects the act will imply an affirmation of some form of natural causality, which classical Ashʿarīs judged to be contrary to divine omnipotence. In contrast, they maintained that human acts are created directly by God, and that natural uniformity relies on a habitual order (*ʿāda*), maintained ultimately by Him, rather than on properties that are inherent in physical objects, including human beings. In order to avoid unequivocal determinism and to affirm religious obligation, they then attempted to bridge the gap that consequently appeared between man and his acts, by developing the doctrine of 'acquisition' (*kasb*). According to al-Ashʿarī, God creates the agent's act as well as the choice by which he 'acquires' both it and its attribute of being an obedience or a disobedience. For al-Bāqillānī, the agent's power itself effects these attributes of action and thereby the agent's acquisition thereof.

However, the later Ashʿarī theologian al-Juwaynī departs in his late work *al-ʿAqīda al-Niẓāmiyya* with the common Ashʿarī position, and contends that the human act is produced, not by divine power

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[113] *Tafsīr*, 2, 52–3.
[114] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 1a.

directly, but by the agent's power alone, provided to him by God.[115] He thus discards the notion of 'acquisition', which he considers to be "a mere word, and pure jargon, without reference to any meaning".[116] Al-Juwaynī is then criticised by al-Shahrastānī, a classical Ashʿarī, for implying a form of natural causality, which detracts from God's omnipotence.[117]

Turning to al-Rāzī's early works, we find that he adheres to the classical Ashʿarī denial of natural causality: he contends that the agent's power does not existentiate the act in any respect, though both are ordinarily concomitant. He thus rejects, not only al-Juwaynī's later position, but also al-Bāqillānī's doctrine of acquisition on the ground that it acknowledges the effectiveness of created power, which, al-Rāzī objects, accords with the Muʿtazilī position.[118]

Yet, from an early stage, he will also abandon the doctrine of acquisition, which he accepted previously. He finds that both human choice and action are created by God directly,[119] and that 'acquisition' does not refer to anything real, but is "a word without a referent (*ism bi-lā musammā*)".[120] This echoes an objection that was frequently levelled against this doctrine by many critics of the Ashʿarīs, including the Muʿtazila.[121] By contrast, al-Rāzī argues, the Qur'ānic expression '*kasb*' refers to nothing but the consequences of acts for the agent:

> 'Acquisition' denotes what man attains by his own doing—so it is his '*kasb*' and his '*muktasab*'—on the condition that that involves realising a benefit or preventing a harm. As such, one says that profits are 'the acquisition of so-and-so', and that 'he acquires much or little', since it refers to profit only. As for the claims of our fellow associates (*aṣḥābunā*) that 'acquisition' is intermediate between determinism (*jabr*) and human autonomy (*khalq*), this appears in the old books of *kalām*.[122]

He does not find the need to resort to this (apparently outdated) doctrine, since he considers that his model of human action does

[115] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 455; *Tafsīr*, 4, 88; cf. al-Juwaynī, *Niẓāmiyya*, 30–5; D. Gimaret, *Théories de l'acte humain*, 148–9.

[116] Al-Juwaynī, *Niẓāmiyya*, 32.

[117] Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 78–89.

[118] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 471.

[119] *Nihāya*, fol. 91b.

[120] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 470; *Jabr*, 260–1.

[121] *Tafsīr*, 4, 87–8. Cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 8, 83 ff.

[122] *Tafsīr*, 5, 208 (commenting on Qur. 2:202); cf. *Tafsīr*, 1, 69; 12, 157; 17, 110.

not lead to the same problems that arise in the Ashʿarī model of action.

Hence, in the late *Kitāb al-Jabr*, he cites a Muʿtazilī argument from Qur'ānic evidence for the view that man produces his acts and against the doctrine of acquisition. The Muʿtazila conclude, he notes, that "bringing the word 'acquisition' into this subject is pure falsification (*maḥḍ al-tazwīr*)". He replies, referring to the contrary view that God creates and determines all events:

> It is necessary to harmonise between the two positions. We say: The combination of power and motivation effects (*mu'aththir*) the act; and the creator of this combination is God, exalted. Since this combination implies (*mustalzim*) the occurrence of the act, the attribution [of acts to human agents] will be real. Since this combination necessitates (*mūjib*) the occurrence of these acts, it becomes true that all is by God's decree and determination. In this way, the contradiction between rational evidence and this Qur'ānic evidence disappears. Know that this is true according to my position in particular, as I hold that the combination of power and motivation implies the act. As for one who does not hold this, it will be hard for him to accept these verses.[123]

Far from defending the Ashʿarī position, al-Rāzī presents his position as a superior alternative.

Yet, crucially, he seems to contend, in this last passage, that the act is caused by the combination of power and motivation, rather than by the agency of God directly. This would come into serious conflict with classical Ashʿarism, which affirms, not only God's absolute determination of all beings, but also that He creates them all directly: they sought to affirm both *qaḍā'* and *khalq*. This begs the question: does al-Rāzī, in the relatively late *Kitāb al-Jabr*, only affirm *qaḍā'*?

Though he rarely discusses the problem of natural causality directly, there are indications in these later works that al-Rāzī indeed departs with the standard classical Ashʿarī position on this question. For instance, in the course of his commentary on Qur. 2:22, "[God] sent down rain from the heavens and brought forth *therewith* fruits for your sustenance", he posits the question of whether God creates fruits following rain by sustaining the habitual order of created things,

[123] *Jabr*, 300–1.

or whether He creates the inherent natures of water and earth such that they produce growth in vegetation once they combine. Al-Rāzī writes that although God is indeed capable of creating these fruits directly (*ibtidā'an*), without any intermediation (*wāsiṭa*), this fact does not contradict His ability to create them through the intermediation of natural processes. 'Later' *mutakallimūn*, he adds, appear to consider these two views contradictory, though they lack evidence for this contention.[124]

Nonetheless, al-Rāzī appears to deny that the effect is *existentiated* by these natural processes, including those that underlie human action. He does so under the influence of "the majority of *falāsifa*", who hold that,

> ... at the occurrence of power with motivation, complete preparedness (*istiʿdād tāmm*) for the production of the act will occur. Yet these physical capacities do not have the ability to existentiate and effect [anything]. When complete preparedness occurs, existence emanates from the Bestower of Forms (*wāhib al-ṣuwar*) upon these essences, and they become existent. Thus, the occurrence of power and motivation produces complete preparedness, while existence and occurrence (*ḥuṣūl*) are from the Bestower of Forms.[125]

While rejecting the *falsafī* doctrines of emanation and the cosmogonic intermediation of the Active Intellect,[126] al-Rāzī accepts Ibn Sīnā's notion that physical objects may produce the preparedness for the occurrence of an event in the physical world. The event, however, will be brought into being by God directly. He writes:

> The combination of power and motivation necessarily implies (*istalzama*) the occurrence of the act. Yet both the antecedent (*malzūm*) and the consequent (*lāzim*) occur by the power of God. Similarly, although substance and accident are concomitant (*mutalāzimān*), they come to exist by the power of God alone.[127]

As such, all created causes, including human power, are in reality mere conditions for the efficiency of divine power. They act, not as efficient causes, but as material causes, in producing human acts. In

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[124] *Tafsīr*, 2, 110.
[125] *Jabr*, 11. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 136 ff.
[126] E.g. *Kamāliyya* (Ar.), 63; (Per.), 74. On Ibn Sīnā's notion of the cosmogonic role of the Active Intellect, cf. Herbert Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes, on Intellect*, 74 ff.
[127] *Jabr*, 11–2.

the *Mabāḥith*, al-Rāzī maintains that all created beings are brought into being directly by God; yet, whereas some things can be existentiated only by virtue of being possible, others will require the presence of some preparing (*muʿidd*) factors.[128] He stresses, however, that though this is the manner in which effects are produced ordinarily, it does not contradict God's voluntary agency, since He is in principle able to suspend natural order and to create effects without any preparing causes, as, for instance, in the case of prophetic miracles.

Later than *Kitāb al-Jabr*, in the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī summarises his position as follows:

> *On Explaining How the Servant is an Agent.* We hold that the combination of power and a specific motive implies (*mustalzim*) the occurrence of the act. Our saying 'implies' refers to a denominator that is common (*qadr mushtarak*) to that combination being a preparing cause (*sabab muʿidd*) for the occurrence of that act and its being an efficient cause (*sabab mu'aththir*) for it. Since the existentiator[129] of power and motivation is God, exalted, and since it has been proven that their combination implies the occurrence of the act, the servant will become a real agent (*fāʿil fī l-ḥaqīqa*); for the effecter of that act is his power and motivation. All man's acts will thus occur according to God's decree. Not as much as an atom in the heavens or the earth will escape the chain of God's decree and predestination (*silsilat qaḍā' Allāh wa-qadarih*). The demonstration for this is that it has been proven that the preponderance of one of two alternatives depends on the preponderator; and it has been proven that that preponderator is [produced] by God's agency.[130]

This passage, however, is not entirely clear on whether the act is brought into being by the combination of the agent's power and motivation, or by divine power. In any case, although al-Rāzī's views in this respect deserve a closer examination than is possible in the present monograph, we can safely conclude that, in his later works, he accepts some form of natural causality that is at odds, fundamentally, with the classical Ashʿarī position. He establishes a real, direct, uniform and (ordinarily) necessary connection between the event and its natural cause. As such, an act will be produced, in a real sense, by its human agent; and there will be a real and direct link between the internal state of the agent and his action.

[128] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 507–8.
[129] Reading '*mūjid*' instead of '*muwajjih*'.
[130] *Maṭālib*, 3, 73.

Al-Rāzī develops his theory of action under the influence of various sources—*falsafī*, Ashʿarī and Muʿtazilī—but he puts forth a unique solution. Although he maintains a number of central Ashʿarī doctrines, he often preserves their formulaic, almost creedal, expressions, without much of their theoretical content and details. Whether his position on the problem of human acts is essentially Ashʿarī or *falsafī* was a matter of debate among later Ashʿarīs. One debate is concluded by Muḥammad ʿAbduh (d. 1323/1905), who remarks, "With [al-Rāzī's] explication, the position of the Shaykh [al-Ashʿarī] unites with that of the *falāsifa*, ... and the position of the Imām [al-Rāzī] is the position of critical investigators (*muḥaqqiq*)".[131]

[131] ʿAbduh, *Ḥāshiya*, 76.

CHAPTER TWO

AL-RĀZĪ ON THE ETHICS OF ACTION

Much of classical *kalām* relates to the so-called problem of 'judgements of goodness and badness' (*al-taḥsīn wa-l-taqbīḥ*), which, according to the early al-Rāzī, is the source from which most heretical doctrines (*bidaʿ*) spring.[1] This enquiry has an essentially metaethical concern, as it investigates issues such as the nature of morality, moral reasoning and moral language. In this context, most *mutakallimūn* will focus primarily on the acts of human agents, which pertain to the more accessible and fathomable 'observable' level (*al-shāhid*), on the basis of which they will then attempt to discuss the 'unobservable', divine level (*al-ghāʾib*).[2] In classical Ashʿarī *kalām*, this metaethical enquiry usually introduces the larger, theological discussion of divine justice—often under the rubric, 'judging [acts] as just or unjust' (*al-taʿdīl wa-l-tajwīr*)—which also includes the problem of whether God is obligated to perform certain acts, the problem of 'God causing pain to the innocent' (representative of the wider problem of evil), and the problem of 'advantage and the most advantageous' (to be discussed below).[3]

Classical Ashʿarī *kalām* ethics is then complemented by a closely-linked enquiry into normative ethics within the science of the principles of jurisprudence (*uṣūl al-fiqh*), which seeks to establish general principles for deriving specific rules and guidelines for human conduct. As the task will require an appreciation of various features of revealed scripture, this discipline will often include a theological component aimed at an ethical analysis of divine command (to the exclusion of divine action). Among the other main ethical themes commonly discussed in *uṣūl al-fiqh* for their normative pertinence

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[1] *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 345.

[2] Acts of other agents may be considered, e.g. angels and Satan, who, by arguing for his superiority to Adam and acting upon it in his refusal to prostrate, is said to be the forerunner for Muʿtazilī ethics (al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 1, 16–8; al-Ṭūfī, *Darʾ*, 67–8; 94–5; 195).

[3] E.g. *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 261 ff.; al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 198b ff.; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 160.

are the problems of 'thanking the benefactor' and 'obligating the impossible' (both to be discussed below).[4]

The mainstay of the classical *mutakallimūn* continued to be what we will classify as theories of the ethics of action. Their focus on action, as opposed to character, is due partly to historical factors, viz. the early theological debates from which classical *kalām* emerged, and the legal influence on theology. Yet, more immediately, it relates to features that are more internal to the discipline of *kalām* itself (in its classical form), especially its focus on the nature of divine action, and the common notion that human nature is essentially physical (since, according to classical *kalām* physics, created beings consist exclusively of atoms and accidents). As such, humans are morally differentiated, not in any essential attributes (viz. of soul or character), but in the values and merits of their acts, which will eventually be reckoned by God.

The *mutakallimūn* advanced theories of moral ontology, epistemology and language, tackling questions such as the nature of moral value, the meaning and reference of moral terms, and the grounds and criteria of moral reasoning and judgement. Most importantly, it was debated whether moral value terms refer to real and objective attributes that are intrinsic to acts, and whether or not moral judgements may be discovered or established by the means of unaided reason (*al-ʿaql al-mustaqill*). These two questions define the main outlines of the classical positions of the Muʿtazilī and Ashʿarī schools, which form the background to al-Rāzī's ethics. It is noteworthy that in ethical theory, as in most other subjects, al-Rāzī pays almost no attention to the views of the Māturīdī school, despite his familiarity with its theology (as is clear from his debates in the *Munāẓarāt*).[5]

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[4] Cf. al-Ṭūfī, *Darʾ al-qawl al-qabīḥ bi-l-taḥsīn wa-l-taqbīḥ*, a compendium of *kalām* ethics.

[5] In contemporary ethical philosophy a distinction is normally made between teleological ethical theories and deontological theories. These have further subdivisions, only some of which are relevant in the present study. The following are brief definitions:

(1) Teleological ethical theories define ethical value by reference to some final purposes of acts (cf. 'Teleological ethics', *REP*). They are further subdivided into two major types:

(a) Consequentialist theories define ethical value in terms of the favourability, or instrumentality, of the consequences that an act promotes (cf. 'Consequentialism', *REP* and *EE*).

(b) Perfectionist theories, or ethics of virtue, define the good in relation to an

The Historical Background

The Muʿtazila

Muʿtazilīs hold that ethical values are real attributes of acts in the world of objects, independently of the subjective judgements, decisions, emotions, or conventions of agents or observers, whether human or divine.[6] This stance is a type of ethical realism, or objectivism: value judgement, according to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, is related to something about the act itself (*amr yaʿūdu ʿalā l-fiʿl*; *yakhtaṣṣu bi-hi*). The Muʿtazila also maintain that some ethical truths are knowable by unaided reason, others by the aid of Revelation.[7] The mind recognises some ethical truths about acts in the same way it recognises non-ethical facts about the external world.[8] This knowledge can be either immediate (*ḍarūrī*) or discursive (*naẓarī*).[9]

The Muʿtazila presented two distinct stances as regards the nature of moral value. The Baghdādī school—represented by Abū l-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī (d. 319/931)—upheld a form of ethical absolutism, according to which the moral value of an act is a real attribute in the essence of the act, which is unaffected by the agent's circumstances,

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objective notion of the perfection of human nature (cf. Th. Hurka, *Perfectionism*; 'Perfectionism', *REP* and *EE*).

(2) Deontological theories treat certain acts as good or bad, or as duties, regardless to some extent of their consequences (cf. 'Deontological Ethics', *REP*). They have further subdivisions, including the following two:

(a) Ethical realism, or objectivism, treats ethical value as intrinsic to acts, thus neither willed by agents, nor reducible to non-rational inclinations (cf. D. Brink, *Moral Realism*; 'Moral Realism', *REP* and *EE*).

(b) Divine command ethics rest on the single, basic non-teleological principle that an act is good or bad if and only if, and *because*, it is commanded or prohibited by God. Often, 'good' and 'bad' are said to *mean*, respectively, commanded or prohibited (W. Frankena, *Ethics*, 28; cf. 'Voluntarism', *REP*; P. Rooney, *Divine Command Morality*). However, if a divine command theory bases obligation on afterlife consequences of acts, it will become fundamentally a teleological theory.

[6] On the Muʿtazilī refutation of Ashʿarī voluntarism, see George Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism*, 97 ff.; ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 102.

[7] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 58. Al-Rāzī sums the core Muʿtazilī ethical position, as do many of their other critics, by reference to both their realist and epistemological stances: "Muʿtazilīs claim [*a*] that the bad is bad by virtue of something that relates to it (*amr ʿāʾid ilayh*), and [*b*] that reason either knows that aspect autonomously (*istaqalla bi-maʿrifatih*) or not" (*Nihāya*, fol. 193b).

[8] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 18.

[9] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 63.

or the act's consequences.[10] Hence, lying and killing are bad and prohibited absolutely, whatever their circumstances.

The Baṣran Muʿtazila (the later and more widespread branch of Muʿtazilism) reject this ethical absolutism.[11] They maintain that ethical judgement depends on the aspects (*wajh*) upon which acts are performed. Inflicting pain, for instance, is bad only within certain sets of circumstances, e.g. that it neither leads to a greater benefit, nor averts a greater harm.[12]

In Muʿtazilī ethics, the fundamental ethical principles are universal, in that they are immutable and apply equally to all agents, including humans and God. Hence, Muʿtazilīs consider God to have certain obligations towards humans, which stem from His essential justice, wisdom, beneficence (*iḥsān*), truthfulness, etc. According to ʿAbd al-Jabbār, although God is a voluntary agent and has the power to perform both good and bad acts, it is inconceivable for Him to perform the latter, since He will have knowledge of their intrinsic badness.[13] God, thus, acts for the wellbeing, or advantage, (*ṣalāḥ*, *maṣlaḥa*) of humans, never in contradiction to it. The Baghdādī Muʿtazila took the more radical view that God is obligated to do what is most advantageous (*aṣlaḥ*) to humans in some respects.

As in all deontological theories, account has to be made of the consequences of some forms of action. In the ethics of the Baṣrans, this appears, for instance, in their theory of 'aspects', which often takes account of considerations of benefit and harm that follow from acts, though they maintain that an act's ethical value remains ultimately intrinsic. Wrongdoing (*ẓulm*) involves, among other aspects, the delivery of harm to another, while beneficence involves the delivery of benefit. Yet their respective badness and goodness are somehow intrinsic, and not due to their actual consequences, which are often subjective.

Benefit (*nafʿ*) and advantage (*ṣalāḥ*) are defined in terms of sensual pleasure (*ladhdha*) and joy (*surūr*), whereas harm (*ḍarar*) and disadvantage (*fasād*) are defined in terms of pain (*alam*) and grief (*ghamm*).[14] These constitute the primary elements for more complex calcula-

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[10] Abū Rashīd, *Masāʾil*, 357; cf. Reinhart, *Before Revelation*, 141–3.
[11] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 77–80; cf. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism*, 63–4.
[12] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 13, 298; cf. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism*, 62–81.
[13] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 127–8.
[14] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14, 34 ff.

tions of benefit and harm, as Ibn al-Malāḥimī writes in his book of definitions, *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd* (quoted by al-Rāzī):

> Harm is pain and what is akin to it, such as grief, the loss of benefit, or what leads to either. ... Benefit is pleasure, joy, what is a means to them, and what is a prerequisite for them. Gold and silver are examples of the 'means' (*mu'addī*). Life is an example of the 'prerequisite' (*muṣaḥḥiḥ*). 'Loss' refers to preventing (*man'*) something from entering into existence at the occurrence of the determinant, or to negating (*izāla*) it after its occurrence. ...
>
> It follows from this division that harms are of ten types: [*a*] pain, as with beating; [*b*] grief, as in the case of swearing; [*c*] prevention of pleasure, as with preventing a man from eating food or sleeping with his wife; [*d*] prevention of joy, as with preventing someone from meeting his loved ones; [*e*] negation of pleasure; [*f*] negation of joy ([the last two] are clear); [*g*] prevention of what leads to pleasure, as with preventing one from earning; [*h*] negation of what makes pleasure possible, as with usurping someone's money; [*i*] negation of what leads to joy ...; and [*j*] negation of what makes joy possible.[15]

Unlike moral judgement, which is objective, considerations of benefit and harm are agent-relative (*iḍāfī*).[16] 'Abd al-Jabbār clearly distinguishes between the two stances, maintaining that an act can be both advantageous and bad, or disadvantageous and good. Hence, the infliction of harm can be good, as in the case of a deserved punishment inflicted in an act of justice. And if a famished person gives food that he has to someone who is not in immediate need for it, that act will be advantageous to the latter, but not good.[17]

Despite the fundamentally deontological ethics of 'Abd al-Jabbār and other Baṣran Mu'tazila, their analysis of the teleological dimensions of human action were a major influence on al-Rāzī's ethics, which is otherwise diametrically opposed to their central ethical doctrines.

The Ash'arīs

Classical Ash'arīs have two main difficulties with Mu'tazilī normative ethics and their analysis of the nature of morality and moral

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[15] *Nihāya*, fol. 194b–195a. Ibn al-Malāḥimī's *Kitāb al-Ḥudūd*, apparently non-extant, is also mentioned in another work of his, the *Fā'iq* (cf. editorial intro. to his *Mu'tamad*, iv).

[16] 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14, 35.

[17] 'Abd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14, 36.

knowledge. On the human, 'observable' level, they maintain that objectivist ethics will undermine the status of Revelation as the sole basis for legislation. On the supra-sensory, 'unobservable' level, it will apply what Ashʿarīs hold to be purely human ethical norms and duties to divine action.

Ashʿarīs, therefore, reject the moral objectivism and rationalism (*taḥsīn al-ʿaql wa-taqbīḥuh*) of the Muʿtazila. Moral language, they maintain, does not refer to any real properties of acts in the external world; for goodness and badness do not have any objective reality at all. Unaided reason, therefore, may provide knowledge of metaphysical truths (e.g. that the world is created, that God exists, and that prophecy is conceivable), but it will never perceive moral truths in acts and things.[18]

However, if this is the case, then what does moral language refer to? In answering this metaethical question, Ashʿarīs distinguish between two classes of moral expressions in ordinary language.

The first class includes expressions that may be said to have moral meanings, or are sometimes used with moral senses, when in fact they have non-moral lexical meanings (which may indeed refer to some objective properties of acts or things). These expressions are particularly relevant to analysing the meanings of expressions relating to divine attributes, which are normally interpreted on the basis of their lexical meanings. Some—including 'justice', 'injustice', 'wrongdoing' and 'wisdom' (*ḥikma*)—are said to describe the perfection or imperfection of acts. Ibn Fūrak writes:

> [Al-Ashʿarī] maintained that, in ordinary language (*iṭlāq al-lugha*), describing an act as 'injustice' (*jawr*) or 'wrongdoing' is not congruent to describing it as 'bad' (*qabīḥ*). For the lexical meaning of '*jawr*' is 'departure from the normal standard and standard measure' (*al-zawāl ʿan l-rasm al-masnūn wa-l-ḥadd al-marsūm*), be the departer obligated (*mukallaf*) or not. The saying, "The arrow 'deviates from' (*jāra ʿan*) the target," if it misses it, is always considered literal. Its missing the target is said to be '*jawr*' in the literal sense, although it is not an act by one who is obligated, or one who is prohibited from it.[19]

Also, the lexical meaning of 'justice' is "balance (*iʿtidāl*) and equilibrium (*istiwāʾ*) in everything, i.e. that there be neither excess nor

[18] *Tafsīr*, 7, 146; al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, 202–5.
[19] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 96; cf. al-Baghdādī, *Uṣūl*, 132.

remissness in it". Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarā'īnī goes even further by interpreting 'good' and 'bad' in the same manner:

> 'Justice' is to put things in their appropriate places, and this is the fundamental sense of 'goodness' (*ḥusn*); 'injustice' is to put things in other than their appropriate places, and this is the fundamental sense of 'badness' (*qubḥ*).[20]

Ashʿarīs accordingly interpret divine names, such as 'Just' and 'Wise', in non-moral senses, mainly as related to perfection, or masterly production, (*iḥkām*) in God's creation, which originates from His knowledge, power and wisdom (whence '*ḥikma*').[21]

The second class includes expressions that undeniably have moral senses in ordinary language (whereas their lexical meanings do not seem to be at issue). However, Ashʿarīs argue that these expressions do not refer to intrinsic attributes of acts, but to the subjective judgements of individuals. Ibn Fūrak again writes:

> [Al-Ashʿarī] maintained that there is only one sense for 'bad' and 'good' in the observable: that what is bad is avoided for the imperfection and harm that it results in for one who does it, and that the good and wise act is chosen because of the benefit and perfection that it results in for one who does it. There is no ground for the act's performance or omission, in the observable, but this or its like.[22]

Ordinary moral language, thus, is completely agent-relative and reducible to the benefit and harm (defined in terms of pleasure and pain), and the perfection and imperfection, of the individual. Something is good for me if it provides me with some sort of benefit or perfection, bad for me if it results in some sort of harm or imperfection for me. It follows from this position that if what one wills is realised, one will consider that to be good; and vice versa. If this will is dependent on the performance of some action by another person, then one may ask or command that person to do so. As such, 'correct' (*ṣawāb*) "may mean 'agreement (*muwāfaqa*) with command', or 'attainment of what is willed (*iṣābat al-murād*)' ".[23]

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[20] From: R. Frank, *Creation and the Cosmic System*, 64, with some modification.

[21] Al-Ghazālī writes, "'The Wise' (*Ḥakīm*) means the knower of the realities of things and the one capable of creating them perfectly according to His will" (*Qudsiyya*, 90; cf. *Iqtiṣād*, 165–6; Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 96–7).

[22] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 141–2; cf. 96–7.

[23] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 96.

Ashʿarīs are then challenged to explain why people will often make moral judgements and perform acts that are not self-centred, but appear altruistic. If a lone traveller in a desert comes across a man or an animal who is dying of thirst, he will help him, even if the traveller is an atheist and does not expect any worldly benefit from this help. Classical Ashʿarīs normally explain such acts as being motivated by 'generic sympathy' (*riqqa jinsiyya*), a purely emotional, subjective motive; when one sees another man in pain, one will feel pain oneself and may be motivated to help.[24]

Al-Ashʿarī reportedly contrasts the second, subjective class of expression with the former, pseudo-moral class:

> Describing something as 'advantageous', 'advantage' or 'most advantageous' is not akin to describing it as 'wise', 'correct' or 'true'. ... Do you not see that the corruption of bodies by maladies, diseases, death, torture in fire, and the occurrence of pains and various harms in them, is related to what is true, wise and correct, but is not advantageous, most advantageous or advantage for the agent or the object of action! Had describing the thing as 'advantageous' and 'advantage' been equivalent to describing it as 'wise', it would have followed it in relations (*iḍāfāt wa-nisab*), such that [something] will be an advantage for whoever it is wise, or wise for whoever it is advantageous—which is false.[25]

However, this Ashʿarī analysis of moral expressions only describes the psychological motives that they commonly express in the mundane realm of everyday language (in the 'observable', as they say), but does not ascribe any normative, prescriptive authority to them. This is why classical Ashʿarīs attach little importance to this subjective sense of value terms, and invoke it solely in their refutation of Muʿtazilī ethical realism, as does al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī:

> We say: Blame and praise rely on ends (*gharaḍ*), i.e. benefits and harms. Something may be good in relation to the ends of one person, so he praises it, harmful in relation to the ends of another, so he censures it. For instance, ... if one informs a man about the infidelity of his wife, [that man] will praise him ..., whereas the woman will censure him. ... What is at issue is not this, but [value judgements] without consideration of ends, in which case goodness and badness will not be essential [to acts]; for only Revealed Law makes [acts] good or bad.[26]

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[24] Cf. Ibn Fūrak (quoting al-Ashʿarī), *Mujarrad*, 142; al-Juwaynī, *Niẓāmiyya*, 27; al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 171; *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 59.

[25] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 127.

[26] Al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 200b; cf. 201b.

Anti-Muʿtazilī dialectic aside, classical Ashʿarīs do not show interest in developing their analysis of ordinary moral language. Their real interest (to which al-Harrāsī refers) lies in the supra-mundane status of Revelation, which alone they regard as the source for duties and rules of conduct.

Relying, often implicitly, on their aforementioned metaethical view that value expressions could be understood in relation to will and command, Ashʿarīs develop a divine command (or a 'voluntarist') theory of normative ethics. As such, they argue that the technical definitions they give to value expressions are not entirely independent of their uses in ordinary language, though they will also stress that, unlike human commands, divine commands are not motivated by subjective inclinations.

According to Ashʿarīs, morality is 'Legal' (*sharʿī*): it consists of the adherence to rules of conduct, including duties and recommendations, that derive from divine prescriptions. "The bad is bad by virtue of the relation of God's prohibition to it (*taʿalluq nahy Allāh ʿanh bih*)".[27] Al-Juwaynī writes, " 'Good' is what the Law presents praise for one who does it"; " 'Obligatory' (*wājib*) is that act that the Law presents a categorical command for [performing it]"; " 'Good' is not an attribute additional to Law, which becomes known through it; rather, it is the same as the Law's presentation of praise for one who does it".[28] And, according to Ibn Fūrak, "To say that our acquisition (*kasb*) is 'good done by us' (*ḥasan minnā*) is equivalent to saying that it is commanded by God".[29]

Revelation, therefore, is the sole, or primary, source for moral knowledge. Most instances of lying are bad, not intrinsically, but because God prohibits them. Some types of lying are not bad, since God permits them. If He decides that lying is good and obligatory, then so it will be.[30] All that humans can, and should, do is to interpret revealed texts, analyse their prescriptions and investigate how to apply them (these being the concerns of the jurist mainly).

In later classical Ashʿarī theology, we find signs of a growing teleological trend, which appears to be a development of the earlier

[27] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 94.
[28] Al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 228; cf. Ibn Fūrak, *Ḥudūd*, 11; al-Mutawallī, *Mughnī*, 43.
[29] Ibn Fūrak, *Mujarrad*, 95.
[30] Al-Ashʿarī, *Lumaʿ*, 170.

subjectivist analysis of moral language, under slight *falsafī* influence. This trend is hinted at most rudimentarily in al-Juwaynī's late work *al-ʿAqīda al-Niẓāmiyya*:

> [The correct] approach [to the question of ethical value] is to consider only one excellent, decisive and concise premise that will erase confusion from within one who understands it. What the 'followers of whims' (*ahl al-ahwā'*) consider to be good in itself, such as belief [in God] and thanking the benefactor, or bad in itself, such as lying and wrongdoing, can only apply to ... one who is liable to harm and benefit. The reality of benefit, pleasure and sorrow (*hamm*) is the sensing of fear from pains and evils, and of comfort from pleasures.[31]

Al-Juwaynī here does not mention any 'Legal' definitions of 'good' and 'bad' alongside this principle. Also, al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī (d. probably *ca.* 503/1110), normally close to Ashʿarī theology, writes, under *falsafī* and Sufi influence:

> Many *mutakallimūn* [viz. Muʿtazilīs] hold that truthfulness is good in essence, and lying bad in essence. Many *falāsifa* and Sufis hold that lying is bad because of its connection to the harms that result from it, and that truthfulness is good for the benefits that result from it. This is so, since speech is an act; and no act can be good in itself. Rather, the good is good because of the benefits related to it, and the bad is bad for the harm that is related to it, which preponderates over the benefit that follows from it.[32]

Though this statement appears in a work on the science of character (*akhlāq*), not *kalām*, it is nonetheless instructive.

The most significant development in pre-Rāzī *kalām* towards teleological ethics is introduced by al-Ghazālī (d. 505/1111), who writes in the *Iqtiṣād*:

> Concerning the 'good' (*ḥasan*), its range of meanings is such that acts, in relation to the agent, are divided into three divisions. The first is for [the act] to be agreeable (*wāfaqa*) to him, i.e. that it fits (*lā'ama*) his end (*gharaḍ*). The second is for it to contradict (*nāfara*) his end. The third is for him not to have a purpose for either performing or omitting it. This division is evident to the mind. Thus, what is agreeable to the agent is called 'good as far as he is concerned' (*ḥasan fī ḥaqqih*); and there is no meaning for its goodness other than its agreement to his purpose. What contradicts his purpose is called 'bad'; and there is

[31] Al-Juwaynī, *Niẓāmiyya*, 26; cf. 45–6. G. Hourani's article, "Juwaynī's criticism of Muʿtazilī ethics", examines the *Irshād* only, but not the *Niẓāmiyya*.
[32] Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Dharīʿa*, 272.

> no meaning for its badness other than its contradicting his purpose. What neither contradicts nor agrees [with his purpose] is called 'vain' (*ʿabath*), i.e. that there is no benefit (*fā'ida*) in it at all.[33]

This marks a crucial turn towards emotivism, which al-Ghazālī advances as an alternative to Muʿtazilī ethical objectivism. He argues that all moral judgements are reducible to the subjective considerations of self-interest, viz. agreement and contradiction to the agent's ends. These arise ultimately from emotions: inclinations (*mayl*) that consist of estimation (*wahm*) and imagination (*khayāl*), and stem from the natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*), rather than reason.[34] "Goodness and badness, for all human beings, are expressions of relative things (*amr iḍāfī*) that differ according to relations".[35] But why do humans sometimes perform apparently altruistic acts? Al-Ghazālī explains that such acts are motivated, first, by generic sympathy (the standard Ashʿarī explanation), and second, by the agent being accustomed to some acts deserving praise or blame.[36]

With al-Ghazālī, this subjectivism is not regarded solely as a dialectical notion that serves to refute Muʿtazilī ethical realism, but it constitutes the grounds for a consequentialist normative ethics that contrasts with the classical Ashʿarī deontological stance. The consequences of acts become the grounds for morality, on which the Legal authority of Revelation will rest. Al-Ghazālī, therefore, writes of three senses for the expression 'good':

> [*a*] Some use it to designate all that agrees with an end (*gharaḍ*), whether immediately or in the distant future. [*b*] Some specify that to what agrees with an end in the hereafter, which is what Revealed Law made good (*ḥassana*), i.e. it exhorted the performance thereof and promised reward for it. This is the technical sense (*iṣṭilāḥ*) of our fellow associates (*aṣḥābunā*). ...
>
> [*c*] There is a third technical sense for it. It may be said, "The action of God, exalted, is good", whatever it may be, and though He has no ends. This will mean that [His action] can result in neither consequence for, nor blame on, Him, and that He acts in His dominion in which He has no co-sharer.[37]

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33 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 163; cf. *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 56–8; *Qudsiyya*, 90; Hourani, "Ghazālī on the Ethics of Action", esp. 71–4. On relevant sections in *Miʿyār al-ʿilm* see Michael Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī on Ethical Premises".

34 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 172–4.

35 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 164.

36 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 170 ff.

37 Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 165.

The third sense is clearly related to the first two. Al-Ghazālī then goes on to give the Ashʿarī definition of 'wisdom', in terms of the perfection of knowledge and action.

The influence of al-Ghazālī's rudimentary consequentialism on later mainstream *kalām* was apparently limited. We find classical Ashʿarī voluntarism being defended by al-Shahrastānī, who also rejects the theory of motivation entirely.[38] This same stance appears also in al-Rāzī's earliest *kalām* work, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, where he writes:

> Nothing is good in itself or its species. Indeed, judgements (viz. goodness, badness, obligation, prohibition, recommendation (*nadb*), reprehensibility (*karāhiya*) and permissibility) rely on the statements of the Lawgiver. 'Good' is what Revealed Law presents praise for one who does it, and 'bad' is what Revealed Law presents blame for one who does it. ... Goodness is the same as the Law's presentation of praise for one who does [an act].[39]

Despite al-Ghazālī, deontological ethics remained, until al-Rāzī's time, the dominant trend in *kalām* among both Muʿtazilīs and Ashʿarīs. Yet, al-Ghazālī's approach signals greater eclecticism, which will lead to al-Rāzī's definitive developments in *kalām* ethics.

Ethical Value

Whereas al-Rāzī's earliest known *kalām* work, *Uṣūl al-dīn*, presents a classical Ashʿarī theory of value, we encounter a more sophisticated ethical theory in his later works. In the *Muḥaṣṣal*, he defines the central value terms as follows:

> 'Goodness' (*ḥusn*) and 'badness' (*qubḥ*) may be intended to refer to [*a*] agreeability (*mulāʾama*) and disagreeability (*munāfara*) to disposition (*ṭabʿ*), and to [*b*] something being an attribute of perfection or imperfection. In these two senses, they are rational (*ʿaqlī*) [conceptions].
>
> They may also be intended to refer to [*c*] something entailing reward or punishment, and praise (*madḥ*) or blame (*dhamm*). For us, this sense is Legal (*sharʿī*), contra the Muʿtazila.[40]

These three definitions represent distinct ethical stances that al-Rāzī, as we will see, eventually develops into a coherent teleological

[38] Al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 370–91.
[39] *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 262.
[40] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 478–9.

ethics. We need to analyse these stances separately, starting with the two that relate to the ethics of action: the subjectivist stance in the present section, and the 'Legal' stance further below in this chapter. The perfectionist stance, which relates to attributes of essence and character, will be the focus of the next chapter.

The earliest account of al-Rāzī's subjectivist definition of value can already be found (alongside the two other definitions) at a slightly later stage than *Uṣūl al-dīn*, in his early *kalām* work the *Ishāra*:

> Man designates the word 'good' (*ḥasan*) for what agrees with his ends (*wāfaqa gharaḍah*), and the word 'bad' (*qabīḥ*) for what contradicts (*khālafa*) his ends. Accordingly, a thing may be good in relation to one person, bad in relation to another.[41]

This same view is advanced in later works. Al-Rāzī writes in the *Maṭālib*, "What we understand by 'goodness' and 'badness' is nothing but benefit (*manfaʿa*) and harm (*maḍarra*)";[42] and in the *Maʿālim*, "There is no meaning for [judging acts as] good or bad (*taḥsīn wa-taqbīḥ*) but the acquiring of benefits and the avoidance of harms".[43] The same applies to other value terms, such as 'good' (*khayr*), 'advantage' (*maṣlaḥa*), 'evil' (*sharr*) and 'disadvantage' (*mafsada*).[44] Moral judgement, therefore, is subjective and reducible to self-interest. As the values of acts are connected to their consequences for the individual, whether past or expected, they are completely agent-relative. The same act will relate differently to the ends of different agents; it may result in favourable consequences for one person, for whom it will be good, but unfavourable consequences for another, for whom it will be bad.

This analysis of moral judgement, which appears from the *Ishāra* onwards, seems initially to be a borrowing from al-Ghazālī, who too defines value in terms of agreeability and disagreeability to the agent's 'ends'. This Ghazālian influence highlights al-Rāzī's increasingly psychological approach to ethics, action and the theory of human nature in general. At the early stage of the *Ishāra*, however, al-Rāzī still adheres to the classical Ashʿarī theory of action, which lacks any significant psychological component.

By contrast, in none of his later works do we find moral value

[41] *Ishāra*, fol. 32b.
[42] *Maṭālib*, 3, 291.
[43] *Maʿālim*, 87.
[44] *Maṭālib*, 3, 21–2 (see p. 23 *supra*); cf. *Maʿālim*, 86.

being defined with reference to 'end', or 'objective' (*gharaḍ*). With his increasingly psychological theory of action, his approach to moral value will require clearer psychological reference points than the notions of agreement and disagreement with ends. In the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī points out that while 'end' refers to the external, 'objective' state of affairs that the agent attains or expects, 'motive' has a subjective, psychological referent.[45]

Thus, in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, as in the above passage from the *Muḥaṣṣal*, al-Rāzī writes that "goodness and badness may be intended to designate agreeability (*mulā'ama*) and disagreeability (*munāfara*) to disposition".[46] Later, in the *Arbaʿīn*, he writes,

> We know that, within ourselves, some things are agreeable (*mulā'im*) to our dispositions, and that some are disagreeable (*munāfir*) to our dispositions. Pleasure (*ladhdha*) and what leads to it are agreeable. Pain and what leads to it are disagreeable.[47]

Benefit and harm, therefore, are ultimately defined in terms of the primal sensations of pleasure and pain that the agent experiences, or expects to experience.

Al-Rāzī considers pleasure and pain to be real (*ḥaqīqī*; *thubūtī*) phenomena that are among the most immediate and self-evident items of human knowledge. They have simple essences and cannot be defined in terms of anything else, not even (as Ibn Sīnā defines them) in terms of our perception (*idrāk*) of what is 'agreeable' or 'disagreeable' to ourselves.[48]

Therefore, al-Rāzī maintains that the notions of 'good' and 'bad' are 'rational', in the sense that they refer to mental perceptions of some simple, internal sensations (in contrast to these notions being essentially Legal, defined with reference to Revelation). Yet, though perceived internally by the mind, these sensations do not stem *from* the mind, but from the agent's natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*), i.e. not from reason, but desire. Al-Rāzī frequently challenges the Muʿtazila "to show that the aversion that one finds within himself [towards bad acts] is rational, rather than originating in natural disposition (*ṭabīʿī*)".[49]

As such, al-Rāzī's ethical rationalism (*taḥsīn al-ʿaql wa-taqbīḥuh*)

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[45] *Maṭālib*, 3, 10.
[46] *Nihāya*, fol. 195a.
[47] *Arbaʿīn*, 246; cf. *Nafs*, 19–20; *Maʿālim*, 86.
[48] This is discussed in more detail, p. 156 ff. *infra*.
[49] *Nihāya*, fol. 199b.

is at odds with Muʿtazilī ethical rationalism. Rather than a realist, cognitivist ethics, he appears to present what in contemporary philosophy is described as an emotivist theory of ethics: moral statements merely express non-rational inclinations and impulses—sensations of attraction and repulsion towards certain acts and things—that emerge from one's natural disposition. If I say, 'Lying is bad', I will mean, 'I hate lying', or 'Lying is repulsive to me'. In his criticism of Muʿtazilī ethical realism, al-Rāzī writes:

> If the statement, 'Beneficence (*iḥsān*) is good', referred to [beneficence] being liked by the disposition and desired by the self (*nafs*), since it constitutes a cause for the occurrence of benefits, this would be true and correct. We do not dispute with you that knowledge of its goodness in this sense is immediate. Also, if the statement, "Wrongdoing is bad", referred to its being hated by the disposition and detested in the heart, since it constitutes a cause for the occurrence of pains, grief and sorrows, then there would be no dispute in that knowledge of its badness in this sense is immediate. ... Goodness and badness become interpreted (*mufassar*) through benefit and harm, and advantage and disadvantage.[50]

Someone with "a sensitive disposition and subtle humours" will tend to be charitable in his conduct and attitudes. By contrast, al-Rāzī adds,

> I saw one of the greatest of kings, who was utterly ruthless, and whose sole pleasure was to watch killing and pillage. The more brutal the form of torture he watched, the more complete would be his joy and the jovial expression on his face.[51]

For such a person, killing and pillage are good, the more brutal the better.

Now, we saw in the previous chapter how al-Rāzī concludes that all human motives and value judgements are rooted in, and reducible to, the two basic sensations of pleasure and pain. He contends that we know immediately (*bi-l-ḍarūra*) that we seek some things and incline towards them and are repulsed by others. From these inclinations, our value judgements are formed. He posits the question of whether these inclinations and judgements have, at their core, some primal inclinations from which they ultimately emerge, or not. If not, then either infinite regress or circular interdependence of inclinations on

[50] *Maṭālib*, 3, 347.
[51] *Maṭālib*, 3, 350–1.

each other will follow, both of which are inconceivable. Therefore, there must be something that is sought in itself and another that is hated in itself ultimately. He continues,

> Having meditated and investigated (*ta'ammalnā wa-baḥathnā*), we have found nothing that is sought in itself but pleasure and joy, or the prevention of pain and grief, and nothing that is hated in itself but pain and grief, or the prevention of pleasure and joy.[52]

According to al-Rāzī, that we do make value judgements independently is a self-evident and inarguable fact. However, as the true nature of value can only be discovered through rational reflection, our knowledge of it is not immediate, but discursive. For the Muʿtazila, by contrast, both the truth of moral judgements and the essences of moral values can constitute immediate knowledge. A Muʿtazilī may argue that all rational men accept that lying is bad, and that when anyone is asked to explain this statement, he will affirm that the badness of lying is intrinsic. Al-Rāzī rejects the latter claim and argues that "in generally-accepted convention (*al-ʿurf al-ʿāmm al-mashhūr*), what people mean by the expression 'evil' (*sharr*) is 'pain and what leads to it' ".[53] Yet, in itself, this conventional usage does not constitute evidence for the immediacy of this knowledge. Indeed, he accepts that some people will make value judgements, believing (wrongly) that value is intrinsic to acts.

A metaethical theory of moral judgement and motivation of the sort that al-Rāzī advances is often described as an egoism, or, given its emphasis on the primacy of the prudential and pleasure-seeking motives, a hedonism. Yet, al-Rāzī's theory does not amount to a crude hedonism; for he outlines a hierarchy of divisions of pleasure and pain, which (as we will see below) differ according to which part of the person experiences them. 'Joy' is a non-physical type of pleasure, and 'grief' a non-physical type of pain, whereas the expression 'pleasure' is often used narrowly for purely physical pleasure.[54] He continues:

> The benefit that is sought for its own sake is either pleasure or joy, and the harm that is avoided in itself is either pain or grief. So it is necessary to investigate which is stronger: pleasure or joy, pain or grief.

[52] *Maṭālib*, 3, 348; cf. *Nafs*, 20.
[53] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 80.
[54] E.g., *Nafs*, 19–20 (translated p. 111 *infra*).

> We say that this varies from soul to soul. There are those who prefer bodily pleasure, while others prefer joy.[55]

Wherever al-Rāzī speaks of 'pleasure' and 'pain' as the primal bases for moral attitudes, these should be understood as referring, not to physical pleasures and pains only, but to pleasure and pain generally, regardless of their type.

The same processes and factors that govern motivation for action (including the agent's internal disposition and external circumstances) also govern the making of moral judgements. For instance, harm is divided into (*a*) harm proper, or 'positive' harm, (*b*) the negation of benefit, and (*c*) the negation of what prevents harm; while benefit is divided into (*a*) benefit proper, (*b*) the prevention of harm, and (*c*) the negation of what prevents benefit. There are also degrees of harm and benefit, and consequently of goodness and badness. Lying is generally considered less bad than wrongdoing, since it normally results in milder harms than those normally resulting from the latter.[56] A value judgement on a certain act will depend on a prudential and pleasure-seeking calculation that occurs in the agent's mind.[57] This notion of a mental calculation behind motivation and value judgement appears to be borrowed primarily from Muʿtazilī discussions of the theme of advantage and disadvantage.[58]

Al-Rāzī informs us that both Ashʿarīs and the *falāsifa* reject Muʿtazilī moral realism,[59] which indicates that the main influences on his later ethical thought are not simply classical Ashʿarīs and al-Ghazālī. As we will see below, he also adopts Ibn Sīnā's view that moral statements, such as 'Lying is bad', are widely-accepted (*mashhūra*) statements, constituting little more than conventional beliefs, not items of knowledge.[60] It appears that, in his *falsafī* works, al-Rāzī makes another, related borrowing from Ibn Sīnā. He contends that statements that have value terms, such as 'good', 'noble' and 'base', as predicates are essentially rhetorical (*khaṭābī*).[61] Value statements tell us nothing about the reality of the things or acts they describe,

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[55] *Maṭālib*, 3, 24.
[56] *Maṭālib*, 3, 349.
[57] *Maṭālib*, 3, 348–50.
[58] Cf. p. 48–9 *supra*.
[59] *Maṭālib*, 3, 289.
[60] See p. 89 *infra*.
[61] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 326a.

but, when used in certain context, they only aim to persuade (*iqnāʿ*) common people.

Moral statements, thus, either express emotions, or evoke them in an audience, in which case they will be prescriptive. As such, the seemingly factual, descriptive statement, 'Lying is bad', will be tantamount to the imperative, 'Do not lie!' This stance, which al-Rāzī adopts form Ibn Sīnā, is reminiscent of contemporary non-cognitivist moral theories (both emotivist and prescriptivist), including the so-called 'Boo! Hoorah!' approach to moral expressions. It is interesting that al-Rāzī takes it to heart more than Ibn Sīnā does, whom he criticises in his discussion of the theory of emanation for using such a value statement as a premise:

> He states in the *Book of Demonstration* of the *Shifāʾ* that if you find the knowledge-seeker[62] saying, 'This is noble; that is base', then know that he is confused.[63] So—my goodness! (*layta shiʿrī*)—how does he allow himself here to use this rhetorical premise in the present scientific discussion![64]

Rhetoric has its appropriate places. But discussions of objective science are not among them.

Al-Rāzī's views outlined so-far constitute a descriptive metaethical theory. But what kind of normative ethics does he advance? Most immediately, his moral subjectivism forms an ideal framework for a self-centred consequentialist ethical theory, the view that an act is good if it serves the agent's own interests, bad if it contradicts them. Yet al-Rāzī considers it superfluous to provide reasons for such a prudential and pleasure-seeking normative stance. He takes it for granted that all rational human beings (indeed even animals) will seek pleasure and avoid pain by their very natures, and will know immediately that they ought to do so. "Avoiding harm as much as possible is rationally imperative (*maṭlūb fī l-ʿaql*)".[65] As such, a basic self-centred consequentialism (a so-called 'ethical egoism') will follow immediately from psychological egoism.

Yet al-Rāzī's normative ethics is more complex. Firstly, while this basic self-centred consequentialism seems to concern mainly the

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[62] Reading *ʿilmī* instead of *ʿāmmī*.

[63] Reading *yakhliṭu* instead of *ghaliṭa*.

[64] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 50; cf. 2, 5–8; 2, 39; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 488; Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Manṭiq*, 5, 131.

[65] *Maṭālib*, 3, 25.

mundane, private sphere, the hierarchy of pleasures and pains that he elaborates allows for a perfectionist ethics that goes beyond this stance and relates to the supra-mundane, private sphere (the subject of the following chapter). Two more normative stances, both based on al-Rāzī's core self-centred consequentialism, are presented in his writings: a contractualist stance, relating to the mundane public sphere, and a Legal stance, relating to both the private and public spheres. These last two stances will be examined in the two following sections.

Revealed Law and Ethical Value

The second sense of value terms that al-Rāzī lists in works later than *Uṣūl al-dīn* relates to Revealed Law. He initially describes it as being a 'Legal' (*sharʿī*) sense, in contrast to the two other senses, which are 'rational' (*ʿaqlī*). In the *Ishāra*, he presents the subjectivist and perfectionist definitions of value terms, and writes:

> 'Good' also designates what the agent is not prohibited from doing. What is permissible (*mubāḥ*) is good in this sense. The same applies to the acts of God.
>
> It also designates what Revealed Law attaches praise (*thanāʾ*), laudation (*taʿẓīm*) and desert (*istiḥqāq*) of reward for one who does it. Conversely, 'bad' is what Revealed Law attaches blame (*dhamm*), derision (*ihāna*) and desert of punishment for one who does it. What is permissible, in this sense, is not good.
>
> Know that, according to the doctrine of the upholders of truth, these last two senses do not constitute attributes for what is good or bad. Rather, they are purely the relations of the discourse of Revealed Law to it (*mujarrad taʿalluq khiṭāb al-sharʿ bi-hi*). Therefore, if permission (*idhn*) for [performing] an act is presented, it will be described as 'good'; if prohibition from it is presented, it will be described as 'bad'.[66]

This distinction between the two definitions of 'good' concerns the sense in which God's acts are said to be good, though not as being 'commanded by Him'. In the *Maḥṣūl*, al-Rāzī prefers the former definition, giving primacy to the notion of 'bad', which is defined more straightforwardly than 'good':

> We mean by 'bad' what is Legally prohibited (*manhī ʿanh sharʿan*); and by 'good' what is not Legally prohibited. Included in [this definition] will

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[66] *Ishāra*, fol. 32b–33a.

> be God's acts, and the acts of obligated agents—be they obligatory acts (*wājibāt*), recommended acts (*mandūbāt*) or permissible acts (*mubāḥāt*)—as well as the acts of the unaware, the sleeper and animals. It is more appropriate than saying, "The good is what is Legally permitted", since it follows from it that God's acts are not good.[67]

Notwithstanding, these definitions are essentially nuances of the same 'Legal' approach to value, the differences being only in detail. Thus, in his early works (before the *Maʿālim*), al-Rāzī continues to adhere to the voluntarism of classical Ashʿarism, reproduced most traditionally in *Uṣūl al-dīn*: value is defined in terms of divine command: 'bad' is what God prohibits; 'obligatory' is what He commands categorically.

The central ethical problem thus remains the same as that of classical *kalām*: whether the foundation of morality is divine command or unaided reason. Al-Rāzī writes in the *Arbaʿīn*:

> [There is] dispute over whether the connection of some acts to blame in this world and to punishment in the hereafter, and the connection of others to praise in this world and to reward in the hereafter, are due to an attribute of the act itself or, contrarily, purely to the judgement of Revealed Law to that effect, or the judgement of those knowledgeable in it.
>
> Muʿtazilīs say that the causes of these judgements are attributes in acts themselves. Our position is that they are purely the judgements (*ḥukm*) of Revealed Law.[68]

The commands and prohibitions of Revealed Law are prescriptions that relate to acts, but do not unveil any real moral attributes of them. "There will be no meaning to 'badness' but a specific relation to the discourse of Revealed Law (*khiṭāb al-sharʿ*)",[69] viz. being forbidden by it as unlawful (*nahy al-taḥrīm*). Al-Rāzī then addresses a main Muʿtazilī objection:

> [Objection:] "Had goodness and badness not been knowable by reason, it would have been impossible for us to know them after Revealed Law presented them; for assertion (*taṣdīq*) must be preceded by conception (*taṣawwur*). Therefore, the basis of goodness and badness must be knowable by reason."

[67] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 136; cf. *Nihāya*, fol. 199b–200b, where the point is made in reply to a Muʿtazilī objection relating to the same problem (cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 107).

[68] *Arbaʿīn*, 246; cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 159–60; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 479.

[69] *Nihāya*, fol. 200b.

[Reply:] We do not claim that we acquire conceptions of the essences of goodness and badness from Revealed Law—which may entail the error you refer to. For we may say that 'obligatory' is what the Lawgiver commands the performance thereof and forbids us from omitting. This much is conceived by us prior to our reception of Revealed Law. Therefore, in saying that these judgements become affirmed only by Revealed Law, we do not imply that they become intelligible by Revealed Law alone.[70]

Following classical Ashʿarīs, al-Rāzī analyses the notion of 'obligation' as used in ordinary language by reference to will and command—'command' (*amr*) being defined as "requesting [the performance of] an act verbally by way of superiority (*ʿalā sabīl al-istiʿlāʾ*)".[71] This much is understood by humans independently of revelation. The fact that a rule is commanded by God in itself constitutes its being a duty, rather than a *reason* for its obligatoriness. 'Obligatory' simply *means* 'commanded by God'.

There is nothing strikingly original in this voluntaristic notion of ethical value, except that the 'Legal' definition is juxtaposed with two other definitions. In al-Rāzī's early works, this juxtaposition appears to serve the negative purpose of showing that the Legal sense is independent of the two other senses, and hence non-rational. It is non-consequentialist; for the sole fact that an act is commanded by God will make it good, regardless of its consequences in this world or the hereafter. Al-Rāzī writes in the *Maḥṣūl*:

The essence of obligatoriness (*taklīf*) becomes established at the prohibition of omitting the act. To establish this, it suffices that blame follows from omission; and there is no need for punishment to follow from omission.

It is strange that al-Ghazālī discusses this problem after scrutinising the definition given for 'obligatory' as 'punishable if omitted', and stating that it is better to say that 'obligatory' is 'leading to blameworthiness if omitted'. This is an admission by him that *establishing the essence of the obligatory does not depend on punishment, but that the desert of blame suffices to establish it.* Then, ... he says that the essence of obligation is established only by the preponderance of the performance [of the act] over omission; and preponderance is realised only through punishment. Doubtless, this is an obvious contradiction.[72]

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[70] Objection: *Nihāya*, fol. 199b; Reply: *Nihāya*, fol. 200b.

[71] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 22. 'Command', al-Rāzī maintains, cannot be defined as "conveying (*ikhbār*) that the punishment of one who omits [the act] is willed".

[72] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 340–2; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 66; 1, 83.

The accusation of incoherence aside, al-Rāzī here clearly objects to al-Ghazālī's consequentialist approach to Legal obligation, and favours classical Ashʿarī deontology, specifically the view taken by al-Bāqillānī, that obligation should not be based on the desert of punishment.

As al-Rāzī becomes increasingly eclectic and independent of traditional Ashʿarī thought, he becomes more aware of the problematic nature of this so-called 'Legal' notion of value. If there is no cognizable link between the standard, non-technical meanings of a certain value expression and its technical definition, the latter will seem arbitrary and unjustifiable. Why does 'good' mean 'what God commands'? Why, for instance, can we not define 'bad' as 'what God commands'? And how do we arrive at obligation from will and command, human or divine, without recourse to consequent reward and punishment? Arguably, the fact that scriptural prescriptions are made by an absolutely superior being neither means, nor immediately entails, that they are obligatory. But if this obligation has to be established by another divine command—'Obey My commands!', 'Thou ought to obey Me!'—then what makes obedience to this command obligatory?

In his later works, the *Maʿālim* and the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī will abandon deontology in favour of teleology. As his later motivational psychology leaves no room for non-teleological action, he adopts a thoroughly consequentialist ethics of action. One crucial premise will be introduced into the prudential and pleasure-seeking calculation: that afterlife pains are by far the severest of all possible pains, and afterlife pleasures are the most excellent pleasures that humans may experience. Since this-worldly pains and pleasures are comparatively mundane, the most rational course of action for the believing agent will be to seek his own personal salvation by aiming to avoid afterlife punishment and attain afterlife reward. The former aim is prudentially the least the agent ought to do, since, according to al-Rāzī, minimising pain is more crucial than maximising pleasure.

He, therefore, abandons the distinction between 'rational' and 'Legal' conceptions of value, and writes in the *Maʿālim*:

> Though debauchery provides a type of pleasure, reason prohibits (*manaʿa ʿan*) it. And it prohibits it only because of its conviction that it will consequently result in greater pain and grief. This shows that the

> modes of goodness, badness, and inculcating fear and desire (*targhīb wa-tarhīb*) are precisely as we have described. ...
>
> Those who view goodness and badness as being based on Revealed Law (*bi-ḥasb al-sharʿ*) define 'bad' as 'leading to punishment if done'. It may then be said to them: Do you accept that reason demands the obligatoriness (*wujūb*) of avoiding punishment, or do you claim that this obligation can be affirmed only by Revealed Law? If you hold the former, then you accept that goodness and badness in the observable are affirmed by the judgement of reason. If you hold the latter, then it would not become obligatory upon one to avoid that punishment except by another obligation. This [second] obligation will mean the successiveness of punishments, which will result in an infinite regress of punishments—which is absurd. Therefore, reason *does make* judgements of goodness and badness in the observable.[73]

As such, to speak of categories of value and of obligation as being non-rational, but 'Legal', does not make sense. Revealed Law (as representing divine command) cannot define obligation as such, but provides some grounds (viz. prescriptions, alongside promises and threats of afterlife consequences), which the mind deliberates upon. Al-Rāzī writes in the *Maṭālib*:

> There is no meaning to 'badness in the Legal sense' (*qubḥ sharʿī*) except [as follows]. Revealed Law tells [the agent], "If you perform such-and-such an act, you will become punishable for it". So his mind tells him, "Ought I to judge the avoidance of punishment obligatory, or ought I not?" If [his mind] judges it as such, rational goodness and badness will be affirmed. If his mind does not judge it as such, then he will need Revealed Law to obligate him to avoid punishment. The latter case will be the same as the former, leading to infinite regress—which is absurd.[74]

Al-Rāzī, therefore, argues for a 'rational' notion of religious moral value, which relies on a process of rational deliberation, informed by Revealed Law. That the human psyche ultimately seeks pleasure and avoids pain "is evident through pure reason (*thābit fī maḥḍ al-ʿuqūl*), whether Law (*al-Sharīʿa*) exists or not—reason judges some things good, others bad".[75] Yet moral value is 'rational' only in the sense of being based on internal perceptions, grasped and reckoned

[73] *Maʿālim*, 86–7.
[74] *Maṭālib*, 3, 289–90.
[75] *Maṭālib*, 3, 290.

by the mind, not in the sense of being rationally intuited, as the Muʿtazila maintain.

Al-Rāzī thus abandons classical Ashʿarī voluntarism categorically. This follows from his more fundamental rejection of classical *kalām* deontology altogether in a bold and definitive way, in which al-Ghazālī before him shows little interest. Essentially, morality does not consist of non-subjective duties and rules of conduct, whether based on intrinsic moral qualities of acts, or on the command of a certain lawgiver. Rather, the measure of moral value becomes the subjective interests of the individual agent, though Revealed Law is reinstated as an objective source for normative judgements.

One may wonder, however, whether this is not merely a non-traditional route to what is fundamentally a very traditional stance: a classical Ashʿarī divine command ethics. Is it not voluntarism in consequentialist garb? And does this stance not lead to the traditional view that normative ethics is practiced solely within *uṣūl al-fiqh*, primarily through scriptural exegesis?

This is very much the conclusion that al-Ghazālī reaches. The primary sources he accepts for establishing rules of conduct are the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth*, consensus and the method of analogical reasoning (*qiyās*).[76] Though *qiyās* will normally rely on rules prescribed explicitly in one or more specific statements in the first two sources, al-Ghazālī maintains that it could be based also on more general guidelines that are derived inductively from the wider body of scripture.[77] These concern the objectives (*maqṣad*) of the Law, which serve the interest of humans in certain general ways, namely, the preservation of religion, soul, intellect, offspring and property.[78] Yet al-Ghazālī contends that this form of *qiyās* may be applied only in cases that fulfil certain strict conditions, namely where a certain course of action is (*a*) necessary (*ḍarūrī*) for preserving one of these five central objectives of the Law,[79] (*b*) universally (*kullī*),[80] and (*c*) beyond doubt. Conventionally,

[76] The method of *qiyās* involves the examination of a particular case to which a scriptural ruling applies, with the aim of determining a Legal ground (*ʿilla sharʿiyya*) for the applicability of the ruling to that case. This ground may then be used to establish further rulings on other, 'secondary' cases, on which no scriptural rulings can be found, and which share that aspect with the original case.

[77] Al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 311–3.

[78] Al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 287.

[79] This is contrasted to acts found advantageous merely for serving a need (*ḥāja*), or for improvement (*taḥsīn*) and embellishment (*tazyīn*) (al-Ghazālī, *Mustasfā*, 1, 286 ff.).

[80] Al-Ghazālī (*Mustaṣfā*, 1, 296) gives the example of saving the entire Muslim

establishing a ruling by this method is not said to be an instance of *qiyās*, but an application of the principle of 'unsupported interest' (*maṣlaḥa mursala*).[81]

According to al-Ghazālī, where a course of action may serve an interest that scripture neither endorses nor rejects, and that falls under none of the five objectives of the Law, or fails to fulfil the conditions of unsupported interest, no Legal ruling in relation to it may be established, as this would constitute unfounded legislation.[82] For al-Ghazālī, therefore, guiding human action in accordance with the consequences of acts (i.e. the normative principle of *istiṣlāḥ*) must be completely subservient to the primary sources of Revealed Law—viz. the Qur'ān and the *ḥadīth*—mainly in the statements they make, and secondarily in the central 'objectives' of the Law that are derived from them inductively. Even then, this approach may be reverted to only in extraordinarily severe circumstances, and, as a form of independent Legal reasoning (*ijtihād*), it will yield conclusions that many jurists will have good reasons to question and reject. It appears, therefore, that though al-Ghazālī starts with a teleological metaethics, his normative ethics of action is fundamentally a divine command ethics, not a consequentialism.

Al-Rāzī takes a very different normative stance in his work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, the *Maḥṣūl*. He maintains that the aspect (*waṣf*) of 'convenience' (*munāsaba*) in an act will constitute a valid ground (*'illa*) that may be used in *qiyās* (*al-munāsaba dalīl al-'illiyya*).[83] Convenience is defined in terms of benefit and harm, defined in turn in terms of pleasure and pain.[84] Benefits, according to al-Rāzī, can be:

1. Worldly benefits, which divide into:
   (a) Necessary (*ḍarūrī*) benefits (viz. preserving the five objectives of the Law: religion, soul, intellect, offspring and property).

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community when attacked by an invading army, in contrast to the case of saving the lives of a limited number of men, which will not be of universal concern.

[81] Cf. Hourani, "Ghazālī", 84–7. On the notion of 'unsupported interest', see Mohammad Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 267 ff. It is common to translate '*maṣlaḥa mursala*' as 'public interest'. Yet '*mursal*' does not mean 'public', but 'lacking the support of scriptural evidence'; and indeed, as this notion is elaborated by jurists, it normally concerns both public and private types of interest.

[82] Al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 310–1.

[83] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 247. On this, see p. 97–100 *infra*.

[84] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 218; *Kāshif*, 51–3.

(b) Benefits that are needed (*ḥāja*), but do not reach the level of necessity (e.g. allowing property rental).[85]
(c) Complementary benefits (*taḥsīn*), which are neither necessary nor needed (e.g. public morality).
2. Religious and other-worldly (*ukhrawī*) benefits, served by spiritual and moral discipline.[86]

The Lawgiver endorses (*iʿtabara*) some forms of convenient action and proscribes (*alghā, abṭala*) others.[87] In *qiyās*, if a scriptural ruling on a given act appears to serve a certain benefit, commensurate rulings may be established on other acts that serve similar benefits. What, then, of convenient acts that the Lawgiver neither endorses nor proscribes? We are referred to a subsequent discussion in the *Maḥṣūl*, on unsupported interest.

So we turn to a chapter, presented after discussing the four primary Legal sources, on other types of Legal evidence that jurists have disputed. The first type regards the 'original state' (*aṣl*) of acts. Al-Rāzī writes:

> Early in this book, we showed that no rulings (*lā ḥukm*) [apply to acts] before the Law [is established], and we responded to the objections of opponents.[88] Now we want to show, using Legal evidence, that the original state for benefits (*manfaʿa*) is permission (*idhn*), and for harms it is proscription (*manʿ*).[89]

The view that benefits are originally permitted is implied in the Qur'ānic verses, "He created for you all that is in the earth", and "Good things are made permissible to you",[90] and by analogy with the cases of benefiting from the light of someone else's lamp, and resting in the shade of his wall—permitted acts that benefit the agent without harming the other person.[91] This evidence only confirms the pre-scriptural condition of acts, where no Legal rulings apply.[92]

[85] Cf. al-Juwaynī, *Burhān*, 2, 923 ff.
[86] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 220–3; cf. *Kāshif*, 52–3.
[87] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 226–30.
[88] Cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 209 ff.
[89] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 131.
[90] Qur. 2:29; Qur. 5:4. Note that the former verse refers to the act of creation, rather than divine command.
[91] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 131–43.
[92] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 209–21.

If no Legal ruling is presented in, or can be inferred from, scripture with respect to a certain act, it will retain its default, pre-scriptural permissibility (*ibāḥa*), in which case one will have a choice in performing it.[93] As regards permissible (*mubāḥ*) acts, the role of Revelation is to confirm (*taqrīr*), rather than alter (*taghyīr*), their default, pre-scriptural state.[94]

On the other hand, the view that harms are originally proscribed appears to rest on scriptural evidence, rather than on some pre-scriptural, default condition.[95] It is indicated by the *ḥadīth*, "No harm shall be inflicted or reciprocated in Islam".[96] As such, benefits are *prima facie* permissible; harms are *prima facie* proscribed. The second Legal method that al-Rāzī discusses is 'the presumption of the continuity of the initial state' (*istiṣḥāb al-ḥāl*), which he accepts as a valid Legal principle, confirming that unless a specific Legal ruling abrogates the original state of an act, this state will persist.[97]

Yet he goes further when, after discussing other Legal methods, he examines the principle of unsupported interest (*maṣlaḥa mursala*), citing the views of al-Ghazālī and Mālik Ibn Anas (d. 179/796), one of the earliest proponents of this principle. Again, this concerns acts on which no ruling can be established using specific evidence from the Qur'ān, the *ḥadīth* and standard *qiyās*. He provides the following division of acts with respect to the benefit or harm they involve: (1) purely beneficial acts; (2) predominantly beneficial acts; (3) acts that are equally beneficial and harmful; (4) acts that lead to neither benefit nor harm; (5) purely harmful acts; and (6) predominantly harmful acts.[98] Necessarily, the Law will sanction the first two types, will not sanction the third and fourth for being vain acts, and will not sanction the last two for their harmfulness. Al-Rāzī goes on to endorse this principle fully:

> These rules, outlined in these six divisions, are known almost immediately (*bi-l-ḍarūra*) to be the religion that the prophets called to (*dīn*

[93] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 359–60.

[94] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 360.

[95] Al-Rāzī's above statement on the 'original state' of harmful acts contains some ambiguity. Yet the essential purpose of this discussion in the *Maḥṣūl* remains normative, not theoretical.

[96] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 143–7. Cf. Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 269.

[97] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 148 ff. On *istiṣḥāb al-ḥāl*, see Kamali, *Principles of Islamic Jurisprudence*, 297 ff.

[98] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 222–3.

> *al-anbiyā'*) and the objective of revealed laws (*al-maqṣūd min al-sharā'i'*). The Qur'ān and the *sunna* indicate that, sometimes explicitly, at other times on account of rules that are prescribed in accordance with what we outlined.[99]

This principle is supported by rational and scriptural evidence, as well as by the consensus of the Companions, who did not adhere to the method of 'contemporary jurists' in analysing the conditions of *qiyās*. "Rather, they only considered benefits, because they knew that the objective (*maqṣad*) of revealed laws is to serve benefits".[100] It is thus "acceptable to rely on" this principle in jurisprudence. In contrast to al-Ghazālī, al-Rāzī endorses it unreservedly, without laying down conditions that limit its application. By this principle, it will become possible to go beyond the default condition of permissibility, by judging acts to be obligatory, recommended (*mandūb*), prohibited, or reprehensible (*makrūh*) purely on the basis of their consequences.

So, if scripture does not present an explicit rule in relation to a given act, other normative methods and procedures may apply to it.[101] Yet the most important are consequentialist, and may be summarised as follows. (1) If the act is beneficial, it will be *prima facie* permitted; if harmful, it will be *prima facie* proscribed. (2) A ruling on the act may then be established by analogy with an existing scriptural rule on another act, if both lead to similar consequences (provided that the scriptural ruling is found to be connected to that consequence). (3) If the act leads to a type of benefit or harm that scripture does not address directly, then a ruling may still be established purely on the basis of the act's consequences. The last normative principle is essentially non-scriptural (despite the contention that scripture sanctions it in principle).

Al-Ghazālī lays down extremely strict conditions to the principle of unsupported interest to the extent that he lists it among false normative methods: whoever uses it (uncritically) will be acting as lawgiver (*man istaṣlaḥa fa-qad sharra'a*).[102] This stance practically results in a

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[99] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 223.
[100] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 225.
[101] See *Maḥṣūl*, 2/3, 129 ff. Al-Rāzī rejects some of the methods he lists here.
[102] Al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 2, 315.

standard divine command ethics.[103] By contrast, al-Rāzī endorses a thoroughly consequentialist stance in his *uṣūl al-fiqh*, which he clearly bases on his philosophical and theological metaethics.

Moral Obligation

The distinction between the moral 'is' and 'ought' was recognised by classical *mutakallimūn*. The Muʿtazila contended, not only that acts can be intrinsically good (*ḥasan*) or bad (*qabīḥ*), but also that unaided reason knows (sometimes immediately) that human agents are obligated to perform some good acts, which thus constitute duties (*wājib*), and to omit some bad acts.[104] On the other hand, though Ashʿarīs reject objectivist conceptions of moral value entirely, they often declare that their most serious point of contention with Muʿtazilī ethics concerns how moral obligations could be established by unaided reason. By contrast, they maintain that both value judgements and obligations are established by divine command.

Acts that, according to the Muʿtazila, constitute 'rational' obligations include some that seem to affect none but the agent. One is obligated, for instance, to omit vain acts and self-injury. However, most 'rational' obligations that the Muʿtazila affirm concern acts that essentially do not serve the interests of the agent himself, but relate purely to other creatures (especially human beings), or to God. These include the obligation to 'enjoin good and forbid evil' (*al-amr bi-l-maʿrūf wa-l-nahy ʿan l-munkar*), to thank the benefactor (*shukr al-munʿim*), and to omit lying, wrongdoing and wrongful killing.

The deontological view that certain acts constitute duties on account of their intrinsic moral value is rejected completely in a self-regarding consequentialism of the type that al-Rāzī upholds. In line with classical Ashʿarism, he maintains that theological reflection (*naẓar*) and thanking the benefactor are not obligatory on the agent prior to the reception of revelation.[105] Notwithstanding, we find that

[103] Unsupported interest was of course discussed by other pre-Rāzian jurists. Al-Ghazālī is particularly relevant since he appears to be the first Ashʿarī jurist to present a consequentialist metaethics. One would expect him to develop a consequentialist normative ethics. Yet he does not.

[104] ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14, 150.

[105] "The obligatoriness of rational speculation is based on Revelation (*samʿī*), contra Muʿtazilīs and some Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī jurists" (*Muḥaṣṣal*, 134; cf. *Maḥṣūl*,

al-Rāzī indeed uses the term *wājib* in a non-scriptural sense, viz. that it is incumbent on the agent to avoid harms that may affect him.[106] Al-Ghazālī too uses '*wājib*' in this sense; George Hourani translates it as 'prudentially necessary', and explains that it is "predicable of an act, when from the standpoint of self-interest its performance is preferable to its omission in a decisive way, i.e. when severe and certain harm to the agent is to be expected from omission of the act".[107] He then notes:

> Any theory in which obligation is related entirely to the interest of the agent is regarded as analysing obligation in a prudential, rather than ethical, way; or rather as totally substituting the concept of obligation with a totally different one.[108]

For both al-Ghazālī and al-Rāzī, duties are imposed on human agents firstly by scripture. Yet their subjectivist approach to Legal obligation makes it an essentially private affair, based on the agent's desert of consequent reward or punishment in the hereafter for his acts and omissions. An agent's contravention of the precepts of Revealed Law will be contrary only to his own interests, as it may incur afterlife punishment on him alone in consequence. But why should one then blame (*dhamma*) someone else's contravention of Revealed Law when it does not affect him personally?

We find that, in contrast to a common trend in classical kalām, al-Rāzī does not relate the notions of 'good', 'bad' and 'obligatory' to the agent's desert of praise (*madḥ*) or blame (*dhamm*) in this world for his acts or omissions (instead of, or alongside, his desert of afterlife consequences). Praise and blame are themselves acts in their own right, performed by external observers, purely by subjective motivations on their part.[109] As such, they do not constitute essential aspects of the moral value of the act praised or blamed.

Yet, having recognised Revelation as a source for norms, the agent will accept its prescriptions, including duties that relate to other humans and entities, while being in themselves of no worldly consequence to the agent himself. Some prescriptions will obligate, or encourage, the agent to direct praise or blame at certain acts

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1/1, 206–8; cf. al-Ṭūfī, *Dar'*, 98). On thanking the benefactor, see e.g. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 193–208.

[106] *Ma'ālim*, 86.

[107] Hourani, "Ghazālī", 71.

[108] Hournai, "Ghazālī", 73.

[109] *Maṭālib*, 3,22; 3, 342.

performed by other agents. In a late work on *uṣūl al-fiqh*, al-Rāzī explains the statement that an agent deserves (*istaḥaqqa*) praise or blame as "his being in a state for which it will be good (*yaḥsunu lahā*) that he be praised or blamed";[110] and for an act to be 'good' in this sense, it will be commanded by God.

Similarly, the obligation to 'enjoin good and forbid evil' becomes a strictly Legal obligation (in contrast to most Muʿtazilīs).[111] Countering their view, al-Rāzī writes in the very early *Uṣūl al-dīn*:

> Our view is that enjoining good and forbidding evil are made obligatory by consensus (*ijmāʿ*). ... Al-Jubbāʾī said that they are known to be obligatory by reason. Abū Hāshim said that if there is any harm that relates to the servant in abandoning them, their obligation will be rational; if there is no harm in that, they will become obligatory by textual evidence alone.
>
> We rely on the consensus of Muslims, prior to these opponents, in commending the enjoining of good and censuring one who abandons it. ... And we have already responded to the Muʿtazila as regards 'judgements of goodness and badness'.[112]

He then cites scriptural statements that affirm this obligation. As expected, at the early, classical Ashʿarī stage of *Uṣūl al-dīn*, al-Rāzī completely rejects even the prudential notion of *wājib*, suggested by Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī.

In one later objection to Muʿtazilī moral realism, al-Rāzī appeals to both the Legal and prudential notions of *wājib*. Following classical Ashʿarīs, he asks: If one hides a prophet from a mob that is bent on killing him, will his lying to the mob about the whereabouts of the prophet in order to save him be good, or (according to the Muʿtazila) bad?[113] Al-Rāzī argues that the man ought to lie for two reasons. First, Muslims have a consensus on the obligatoriness of saving the prophet's life; one who can do this only through lying will be obligated to lie. Second (a point not made by classical Ashʿarīs), since that mob is likely to kill that person because of his hiding the

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[110] *Maʿālim uṣūl al-fiqh*, 26.

[111] E.g. al-Zamakhsharī, *Minhāj*, 77–8. Cf. Cook, *Commanding Right*, 195 ff.

[112] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 332. Cf. *Ishāra* (fol. 59b): "Enjoining the good and forbidding the evil, repentance, judgments of unbelief and dissoluteness, and the imamate, are all Legal matters".

[113] *Nihāya*, fol. 197a–b. Cf. al-Shahrastānī, *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 372. ʿAbd al-Jabbār (*Mughnī*, 6/1, 342) argues that even in such situations lying will still be bad, and that one ought to use insinuation (*taʿrīḍ*) instead (cf. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism*, 78).

prophet, it will be prudentially obligatory on him to lie.

The Muʿtazila, however, argue that not all observable human behaviour can be reduced to self-interest. Rather, the observation of human behaviour shows that humans often find themselves obligated to act altruistically, purely with the purpose of benefiting others, not for their own benefit. Does this behaviour not prove that humans know through unaided reason that the performance or omission of certain acts is obligatory? Rejecting this Muʿtazilī explanation, al-Ghazālī explains this behaviour as being motivated by simple psychological factors, mainly generic sympathy,[114] desire for praise,[115] habit and various dispositions.[116] As we saw already, al-Rāzī too uses these explanations of human motivation and moral judgment. But does he go beyond this basic emotivism? Two relevant discussions, in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl* and the *Maṭālib*, deserve especial attention.

In the latter work, al-Rāzī devotes one section to a crucial Muʿtazilī distinction, namely "the division of motives into what is a motive of need (*dāʿiyat al-ḥāja*) and what is a motive of beneficence (*dāʿiyat al-iḥsān*)",[117] which stems from the agent's wisdom (*ḥikma*), i.e. knowledge of moral truths. He writes that "the meaning of 'motive of need' is the pursuit to deliver good and benefit to oneself, and the meaning of 'motive of wisdom' is the pursuit to deliver good to others".[118] Al-Rāzī of course recognises only the former, subjective and self-centred type of motivation, to the exclusion of the latter, altruistic motive of beneficence, which presupposes that the agent may act principally and purely to deliver benefit to others, without any element of self-interest. This would amount to moral objectivism.[119]

He declares that there are two main 'stations' (*maqām*) at which the Muʿtazilī views on the motive of beneficence may be contested. The first is metaphysical, and concerns the view that moral value is intrinsic to acts—which will be the subject of the following section. Interestingly, the second station concerns the question of whether having knowledge of value judgements could motivate the agent to act accordingly. What concerns us at this point is not the criti-

[114] Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 170–1.
[115] Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 171; 174.
[116] Cf. Hourani, "Ghazālī", 83.
[117] *Maṭālib*, 3, 65–72. Cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 14, 24; 14, 38.
[118] *Maṭālib*, 3, 69–70.
[119] *Maṭālib*, 3, 65.

cism, but the alternative explanation that al-Rāzī provides for the phenomenon of beneficent action. This will provide insight into his approach to non-Legal obligation.

He first affirms his commitment to his own theory of value:

> We have shown that benefit is sought in itself, and that harm is avoided in itself. All that leads to preponderant benefit is good, and there is no other meaning to its goodness. All that leads to preponderant harm is bad, and there is no other meaning to its badness.[120]

The Muʿtazila, however, point out that we know by our minds that acts can be both bad and beneficial, or both good and harmful. Al-Rāzī lists four such cases that they cite. *(a)* Though the wrongdoer benefits from his wrongdoing, he will still know that wrongdoing is bad. Elsewhere, he cites the following Muʿtazilī argument:

> Though wrongdoing is harmful to the one wronged, it benefits the wrongdoer. The establishment of justice will benefit one individual, but harm another. Paying a deposit back will benefit the recipient, but harm the giver. If these cases are judged by the inclination or aversion in the disposition, the wrongdoer will judge wrongdoing good, while the one wronged will judge wrongdoing bad.[121]

However, the Muʿtazila maintain that this is not the case. They also cite *(b)* the case of a highly eloquent poem, which is composed well, written in fine calligraphy and recited beautifully, but which contains blasphemy. The mind (*ʿaql*) will recognise that such a poem is bad, despite the pleasure that will be found at the level of the natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*) in reading, and listening to, it.[122] Also, *(c)* though the liar benefits from his lying, he will know, by unaided reason, that it is bad.[123] *(d)* One who finds a sick blind man on the verge of death in a desolate desert will know by reason alone that he is obligated to help, even where he expects that his help will only burden him and not benefit him in any way (e.g. he may expect never to meet him again for his favour to be returned, nor to be praised by other people, as no other person is present, nor to receive afterlife reward, as he may be an atheist).[124]

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[120] *Maṭālib*, 3, 66.

[121] *Nihāya*, fol. 199a.

[122] Cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 169.

[123] Al-Rāzī cites a similar argument from ʿAbd al-Jabbār's Qurʾānic commentary (*Tafsīr*, 16, 222).

[124] *Maṭālib*, 3, 67.

Al-Rāzī, however, contends that these observations are in fact explainable from a consequentialist standpoint, and he advances two lines of reasoning.[125] The less important of the two is the traditional Ashʿarī explanation, by reference to the motive of 'generic sympathy', which he here appeals to only in relation to the example of the blind man in the desert. Man is created (*jubila*) such that the adverse conditions and pains he observes in other humans normally produce a comparable pain within him, motivating him to help.[126] Contrasting between divine mercy and human compassion, al-Rāzī writes in his book on divine attributes:

> Some sort of pity (*ra'fa*) has to appear in the servant's heart for him to act compassionately. If one contemplates [this, he will find] that the only end (*maqṣūd*) the servant can have is to avert [the pain caused by] generic sympathy in his heart. In reality, he will be compassionate towards others only in order to rid himself of the pain that sympathy produces. God is exalted above this sympathy, and His compassion (*raḥma*) does not rely on it, but will rely on pure favour and beneficence. We will support this with some examples.
>
> When a father does good (*aḥsana*) to his child, he will actually be doing good for himself. For if the wellbeing (*maṣāliḥ*) of that child is undermined, the father's heart will be pained. If he does good for the child, his wellbeing will be preserved, and the pain will be negated from the father's heart. Therefore, the father does good for the child only in order to realise that end for himself.
>
> When a master does good to his slave, he does so only in order that [the slave] may benefit him, so that he gains him profit and serves him. Therefore, the master's end of that beneficence is the procurement of good for himself.
>
> When man acts generously and pays his alms, he does so only to gain fame among people as a generous and noble person, or to attain reward and escape punishment in the hereafter. In reality, he does good for himself alone.[127]

Such emotive, psychological explanations attribute acts directly to simple motives in the agent's psyche.

Yet, in the *Maṭālib*, the main explanation that al-Rāzī advances for beneficent action is more sophisticated. He addresses the first of

[125] *Maṭālib*, 3, 68.
[126] *Maṭālib*, 3, 69; *Nihāya*, fol. 198b–199b.
[127] *Lawāmiʿ*, 159–60.

the above Muʿtazilī examples as follows:

> Were the wrongdoer to judge wrongdoing good, he would be unable to avert wrongdoing being done against him. His life would be imperilled, and his wealth liable to plunder. It will thus become obligatory on him (*yajibu ʿalayh*), in considering the benefits of his soul and wealth, to judge wrongdoing bad, in order that his soul and property be preserved from annihilation and detriment.[128]

Al-Rāzī accepts that even wrongdoers will generally consider wrongdoing as such to be bad. But how would the agent's interests be undermined by his denial of such norms?

Al-Rāzī's response to the second Muʿtazilī example then introduces the most crucial notion in this discussion. Judging the beautiful, blasphemous poem to be good, he argues, will be contrary to the 'advantages of the world', or public wellbeing, (*maṣāliḥ*, or *maṣlaḥat al-ʿālam*) in various ways.[129] First, if such blasphemy were tolerated, God's commands and prohibitions would lose their influence on people's hearts, leading to bloodshed and anarchy (*al-harj wa-l-marj*).[130] Second, God is the highest of all beings and the most beneficent to the needy. If blasphemy against Him were allowed, it would not be possible, as al-Rāzī puts it, to use the aid of virtues (*faḍāʾil*) in averting harms—which contradicts public wellbeing. Third, he argues in the *Maḥṣūl* that tolerating such poems would lead to the degradation of the virtuous, which would be contrary to human wellbeing.[131] All three (non-Legal) grounds for judging the poem bad are non-deontological: the badness of blasphemy is in no way intrinsic.

This is in clear contrast to the classical Ashʿarī approach, whereby the blasphemous poem would be bad purely by God's prohibiting blasphemy. It is also noteworthy that al-Rāzī does not approach

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[128] *Maṭālib*, 3, 68.

[129] He also speaks of the 'order of the world' (*niẓām al-ʿālam*) (*Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 180; *Nihāya*, fol. 200a; *Tafsīr*, *passim*.). Though the *falāsifa* used this expression in a cosmological sense, it was widely used in reference to social order, which is the sense that al-Rāzī intends (e.g. al-Māwardī, *Adab*, 2, 242 ff.; Miskawayh, *Tahdhīb*, 127; al-Tawḥīdī, *Hawāmil*, 233; 310).

[130] Elsewhere (*Maṭālib*, 3, 291), he refers to this discussion: "[We stated that] wrongdoing, though beneficial to the wrongdoer, is extremely harmful to the condition of the world (*waḍʿ al-ʿālam*). For if we were to judge wrongdoing good, bloodshed and anarchy would prevail, and no one would trust one's spouse and partner. This is one of the greatest harms."

[131] *Maṭālib*, 3, 68; *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 170.

this problem from his own Legal standpoint, despite its applicability; viz. that the agent finds the poem and its recitation deplorable solely because tolerating and enjoying it would be contrary to his own afterlife benefits.

His response to the third Muʿtazilī example follows a similar line: the liar benefits from his lying, but knows that lying is bad, since to allow it would contradict human wellbeing. Lying would undermine the bases for much of human action and pursuit, rendering them futile. The person lied upon will waste his time, or in some cases much of his life, suffering much anguish consequently. For this reason, lying contradicts human wellbeing, whereas truth-telling preserves and advances it.[132]

On the fourth Muʿtazilī example (the blind man in the desert), al-Rāzī writes:

> Among the conditions that contribute to preserving human wellbeing is inculcating the desire (*targhīb*) of beneficence among people, with the hope that were the like of that state to occur to [the agent] himself, they would act compassionately toward him. Since this aspect was found to serve public wellbeing, people evidently consented (*iṣṭalaḥa*) on [considering] it good and [considering] omitting it bad. Since people have become accustomed to this convention (*iṣṭilāḥ*), agreed upon it, and adhered to it throughout their lives, these states have unmistakably become well-established in their hearts and minds.[133]

We need now to look into the nature of this link that al-Rāzī makes between moral norms and public wellbeing (a theme that does not appear in classical *kalām*). First of all, it is clear that the preservation of social order and wellbeing requires a general acceptance of these norms. However, it is not immediately clear, within a self-centred consequentialism, how any individual would be motivated to contribute to the preservation of social order by accepting such altruistic norms. For these will be of no immediate benefit to him, but may delimit his freedom to further his own interests, or may even disadvantage him.

Al-Rāzī appears to hold that virtually every individual (including wrongdoers) will be aware of the fact that it is not in their own

[132] *Maṭālib*, 3, 68; *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 170; cf. *Tafsīr*, 16, 222: Lying "undermines the wellbeing of both the world and the self".

[133] *Maṭālib*, 3, 69. Contrast this to the Ashʿarī explanation through generic sympathy.

interest (nor in anyone else's) that anarchy prevails. From this, the individual will realise that the preservation of social order will serve his own interest (along with the interests of other members of society), and will thus be necessary from a prudential standpoint. Al-Rāzī writes in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*:

> If the wrongdoer declares (*aftā*) that wrongdoing is good, someone else will soon wrong him. Since, in his natural disposition, he hates that anticipated wrongdoing, and since all that leads to what is hated is itself hated in the natural disposition, wrongdoing will indeed be hated by the wrongdoer. The same applies to all other [commonly-accepted moral norms].[134]

And in the *Maṭālib*:

> The wrongdoer knows that if he were to declare that wrongdoing is good, he would have conceded that others may wrong him. He would then no longer have security for himself, his property and his family. Therefore, since he knows that judging wrongdoing to be good will open the gates to pains and grief upon him, he will undoubtedly judge wrongdoing to be bad. The same is true in the case of lying. As for judging beneficence and saving the poor from hardship to be good, it [i.e. the judgement] will be good since it opens the gates to benefits and goods.[135]

The individual will realise that the preservation of social order requires that everyone, including himself, accepts such moral norms; for to deny their validity would immediately undermine their general acceptance. As the last passage indicates, the very act of pronouncing moral judgements becomes itself a good act by virtue of its favourable consequences.

The agent thus finds himself motivated to consent to moral norms, which will hinder his liberty to further some of his immediate interests, but will also preserve his more fundamental interests from being undermined by others. Ultimately, the motivation to act beneficently, in accordance with these norms, is neither altruistic nor based on a sense of duty stemming from the agent's knowledge of the intrinsic goodness of beneficence, but is a self-centred, prudential motivation. In *Risālat Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, al-Rāzī writes that "a human agent will attempt to procure benefit for others, only on the condition that such

[134] *Nihāya*, fol. 199a.
[135] *Maṭālib*, 3, 349.

help will bring benefit to him".[136] He also writes:

> What is sought by the animate being (*ḥayawān*) is pleasure only; what is avoided is pain only. All that leads to the attainment of pleasure, directly or indirectly, will be judged good by [the individual]. All that leads to pain, directly or indirectly, will be judged bad by him.
>
> Examples of the former are filial piety, fairness, justice and respect for agreements; for if someone else does these things to him, he will find them pleasurable and will benefit from them. Thus, for that expected benefit, [people] consent (*tawāḍaʿū*) to holding them good.
>
> Examples of the latter are the badness of wrongdoing; for everyone knows that if one were to judge it good, he might be wronged and might experience pain himself. Therefore, [people] consent to holding it bad in order to avoid that expected harm.[137]

'After' people agree upon (*iṣṭalaḥū*), or consent to (*tawāḍaʿū*; *ajmaʿū*), these moral norms, the conventionality of these norms will be forgotten:

> [The reason for the agent's attempt] to save [the life of the blind man on the verge of death in a desolate place] is that since people consent (*ajmaʿū*) to considering such rescue to be good—as it contributes to the benefit of a stable world (*maṣlaḥat baqā' al-ʿālam*)—[the agent] grows up accepting that consensus (*ijmāʿ*), becomes habituated to it, and never hears anything that contradicts it. That [convention] will become like an *a priori* proposition (*qaḍiyya awwaliyya*) [for him].[138]

An implicit social agreement lies at the background of widely-accepted moral conventions, which is then, as it were, 'forgotten'.

Both classical Ashʿarīs and al-Ghazālī maintain that many moral norms are mere habitual social conventions. Al-Rāzī takes a step further by providing a rudimentary account of the socio-psychological process by which norms appear and are sustained. In short, *(a)* the individual realises, out of fear and prudence, the necessity of having a widely-accepted set of norms and duties; *(b)* people, thus, consent to a convention of moral norms, *(c)* which then become perceived as objective truths, mainly through habituation. Despite the many

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[136] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 17.

[137] *Nihāya*, fol. 199b; cf. fol. 198b.

[138] *Nihāya*, fol. 200a. He continues: "If we assume that [this act] is performed by someone who has never heard any [moral] opinions, the cause [for his act] will be the pain caused in his heart by generic sympathy. ... If we assume that it is performed by one who is not [motivated] thus, we do not accept that, in this case, he will consider rescue preferable to the omission thereof. Rather, how can he be expected to act when saving is arduous—which constitutes a deterrent!"

seemingly altruistic acts observed in everyday human behaviour, the underlying motives at work within human nature are necessarily self-regarding, never altruistic:

> It becomes evident ... that there is no evidence for any type of motive, in the observable, except the one you [the Muʿtazila] term 'the motive of need' (*dāʿiyat al-ḥāja*). As for what you term 'the motive of beneficence', its existence in the observable has never been proven.[139]

Al-Rāzī advances this rudimentary utilitarianism as an alternative to the Muʿtazilī theory of beneficence and moral obligation. In the final chapter, we will see how he bases his political thought on this same utilitarian stance.

Objections to Muʿtazilī Ethics

Classical Ashʿarī discussions of ethics have two primary concerns: negatively, to refute the Muʿtazilī view that value terms refer to real attributes of acts; and positively, to prove that Revealed Law alone has moral authority at the human level and that ethical value terms refer strictly to its command and prohibition. Al-Rāzī has a different positive concern, as he abandons the voluntarism of classical Ashʿarīs. And though he shares their negativist concern, this theoretical leap in his thought from voluntarism to consequentialism demanded a commensurate leap in the dialectic with Muʿtazilī ethical realism, especially that al-Rāzī commits himself to a more thorough and objective critical method than that of classical *kalām*.[140]

This development manifests most immediately in his criticism of the Ashʿarī school's failure to recognise and address the dominant position in the Muʿtazilī school. He writes in the *Maṭālib*:

> A Great many of the followers of Abū l-Ḥasan al-Ashʿarī, may God have mercy on his soul, refuted ethical rationalism by saying: "Had killing been bad in essence (*li-dhātih*), every killing would, necessarily, have been bad, and killing by way of Legal punishment would have been bad. Had benefit been good in essence, every benefit and pleasure would have been good; so fornication and sodomy would, necessarily, have been good. This not being the case, we know that claiming

[139] *Maṭālib*, 3, 70.
[140] See Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 164–9.

the good to be good in essence and the bad to be bad in essence is a false claim".[141]

Muʿtazilīs then say: "This argument does not apply to what we say. For we do not say that the good is good in essence and that the bad is bad in essence. Rather, we say that the good is good on account of aspects (*wajh*) that relate to it, and the bad is bad on account of aspects that relate to it."

At this point, Ashʿarīs say that explanation with reference to aspects is neither comprehensible (*mafhūm*) nor conceivable (*maʿqūl*).

We will here explain these aspects, such that what is intended in them may become comprehended. We say: ... Man may want to take a particular medicine. What determines that want is not the essence of that medicine, but a combination of things, including the occurrence of certain humours in the body, the unavailability of other medicines and the appearance of symptoms of illness in the body. The combination of these states (*ḥāl*) will produce the want to take that medicine. If you know this, know that there is nothing below the lunar sphere that will necessitate anything by its essence (*li-dhātih wa-li-ʿaynih*). Rather, necessitation and determination will occur at the combination of states, aspects and conditions.

Muʿtazilīs, therefore, say: "We do not say that what makes killing bad is solely its being killing. Rather, what makes it so is the combination of a number of things, namely its being an occurring pain, not for a previous offence, nor for a subsequent compensation (*ʿiwaḍ*). And so forth with all good and bad things."

It thus appears that those who have relied on this argument to refute the claims of the Muʿtazila did not know their position and did not address all their views.[142]

Al-Rāzī himself appears to be aware of the central difference between the two Muʿtazilī positions from his earliest theological work, where he distinguishes between the ethical absolutism of earlier Muʿtazilism and the more sophisticated theory of aspects developed by later Muʿtazilīs.[143] The range and quality of objections he advances against the theory of aspects will undergo immense progress, from the often topical Ashʿarī-style arguments in his earliest works, to the sophisticated dialectic developed in his later works, most importantly in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl* and the *Maṭālib*, on which the present section will focus.[144]

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[141] Cf. al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 233–4; al-Mutawallī, *Mughnī*, 43; al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 57; al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *al-Dharīʿa*, 272; Hourani, *Reason and Tradition*, 131–3.

[142] *Maṭālib*, 3, 338–9.

[143] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 265.

[144] Mainly *Nihāya*, fol. 193b–203a; *Maṭālib*, 3, 279–358; cf. *Maʿālim*, 85–9; *Arbaʿīn*, 246–53; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 479 ff.; *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 132–7; 1/1, 159–219; *Khamsūn*, 60–3; *Tafsīr*, *passim*. Cf. Kevin Reinhart, *Before Revelation*, 163–4; and Sherman Jackson, "The

Al-Rāzī's observation is correct: classical Ashʿarī criticisms refuted mostly the ethical ontology of what is actually the primitive ethical absolutism of the Baghdādī branch of Muʿtazilism. This is true also of al-Ghazālī's criticism of Muʿtazilī ethics, which is not fundamentally different from the classical Ashʿarī criticism.[145] Yet the Baṣran branch (which, unlike the Baghdādī branch, still enjoyed a considerable following in al-Rāzī's time[146]) did not present a clear ethical ontology, but an ethical epistemology: the Baṣrans had much more to say on the nature of our knowledge of morality than on the nature of morality itself. Despite their denial that ethical value can be pinned down metaphysically amid the various 'aspects' upon which the act takes place, which determine its moral status, the Baṣrans will maintain that it has an objective reality outside the mind's perception thereof. They will, therefore, dismiss classical Ashʿarī objections as irrelevant, not only since they constitute an outdated criticism of the earlier Baghdādī school position, but more fundamentally because they relate to ethical ontology. On his part, al-Rāzī will address the ethics of the Baṣrans by developing the metaphysical line of criticism and, more importantly, by advancing what seems to be the first epistemological criticism.

Ethical Metaphysics

One interesting argument concerning the metaphysical status of ethical value can be found in the early *Ishāra*:

> The attribute that [the Muʿtazila] relate goodness and badness to is not the act's being an accident, or created (*muḥdath*), or temporal (*ḥādith*), or existent, or will, or knowledge, or power.[147] So it is an unidentified attribute (*ṣifa majhūla*). Yet it is unacceptable to resort to affirming this; for affirming one unidentified attribute cannot be more acceptable (*awlā*) than affirming a third and a fourth, and so on to an infinity of attributes.[148] However, if such an attribute is not affirmed, it will be inconceivable to ascribe goodness and badness to it.

Alchemy of Domination", 191–4, both examining some objections to Muʿtazilī ethics in the *Maḥṣūl*.

[145] Cf. Hourani, "Ghazālī", 81 ff.

[146] He writes that the Muʿtazila existing at his time are followers of either Abū Hāshim al-Jubbāʾī or Abū l-Ḥusayn (*Iʿtiqādāt*, 42).

[147] Cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 77 ff.

[148] On this argument *ad ignorantiam*, which al-Rāzī later considers fallacious, see: Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 165.

> This being the case, the goodness or badness of things is not due to the essence of the act, or to an attribute concomitant to it. ... Therefore, it must be an attribute of the agent. Yet this attribute cannot be [*a*] the agent's being a knower, for knowledge follows from what is known, but does not affect it; nor [*b*] his having power, for power only effects existentiating the act, which does not vary among good and bad [acts]; nor [*c*] his having will, for that would make wrongful killing ... good if the agent intended it to be good.[149]

In other words, if we assume that the perceived ethical value of the act is real and objective, then what exactly is the nature of this reality? Al-Rāzī argues that it is in fact unreal and inconceivable: beyond the agent's subjective judgement, no sign (*athar*) of ethical value can be identified whatsoever.[150] We are unable to perceive or find 'goodness' and 'badness' outside ourselves. Along this general line of criticism, he advances a number of narrower arguments relating to specific acts or situations.

One such argument relates to the act of lying, defined as a statement (*khabar*) that is contrary to a true state of affairs.[151] Al-Rāzī argues that since a statement, as speech, consists of a string of discrete consecutive sounds, what exists of it will be the single sound only, never whole words or phrases. Strictly speaking, the spoken word does not exist, since when the speaker utters a sound, the sound uttered immediately before it will cease to exist (though its effect in the mind of the listener persists). The verbal lie could be each individual sound (which is absurd), or the total (*majmūʿ*) of all the sounds of the statement (but this total does not exist). Therefore, 'untruthfulness' (*kadhibiyya*) and 'truthfulness' (*ṣidqiyya*) are not real and objective (*thubūtī*) attributes of speech. Yet something that does not exist cannot have an existent attribute, or be the ground (*ʿilla*) for that attribute.

In the *Nihāya*, al-Rāzī considers the possible objection that speech expresses the mental judgement of the speaker, which, strictly speaking, is the lie. He replies that if this 'mental judgement' refers to a belief (in the mind of the liar) that is contrary to truth, it will be ignorance, not lying. On the other hand, it could refer to the statement within the self, which could be willed; yet the Muʿtazila reject

[149] *Ishāra*, fol. 34a–b.
[150] *Maṭālib*, 3, 291; 3, 334; cf. 3, 348.
[151] *Nihāya*, fol. 195a–b; *Maṭālib*, 3, 335–6.

the notion of 'speech within the self' (*kalām al-nafs*), a doctrine upheld by Ashʿarīs, relevant mainly to the question of the uncreatedness of the Qur'ān.[152]

In the *Maṭālib*, he cites another possible Muʿtazilī counter-argument: that, within his own consequentialist framework, he himself admits that speech may be judged as good or bad—does this not contradict his argument? Al-Rāzī responds that he does not evaluate the act of speaking in itself. Rather, the meanings that lying produces within the listener, which do not communicate to him a correct understanding of the true state of affairs, may motivate him to act in a way that is disadvantageous (e.g. if futile or harmful) to him. For this reason, people will judge lying as such to be bad.[153] As such, consequentialist judgement does not face this same difficulty as deontological judgement, since it does not concern the act itself, but its subjective consequences.

Therefore, while the ethical objectivism of the Baghdādī Muʿtazila is refutable on account of the ethical ontological claims that they make, the ethical objectivism of the Baṣrans is refutable for their failure to justify their claims ontologically. As regards the metaphysical status of morality, if the ethical ontology of the Baghdādīs is false, the ethics of the Baṣrans appears utterly nonsensical.

Ethical Epistemology

Nonetheless, al-Rāzī gives his opponents the benefit of the doubt. He realises that Muʿtazilī ethical theory is most seriously challenged at the epistemological level, which becomes his primary focus. Thus the last two sections of Book 3 of the *Maṭālib* (introduced by al-Rāzī's above criticism of classical Ashʿarī objections to Muʿtazilī ethics) provide an account and a refutation of Muʿtazilī ethical epistemology.[154]

He cites the common Muʿtazilī view that the knowledge of some ethical truths is immediate (*ḍarūrī*), that of others acquired (*kasbī*), or inferential (*istidlālī*).[155] For the latter type, the Muʿtazila rely on arguments *ad hominem* (*ilzām*) and purported proofs (*mā jarā majrā al-*

[152] Al-Bāqillānī (*Inṣāf*, 158) writes: "Real speech is the meaning (*maʿnā*) that exists in the self, and has signs (*amāra*) that indicate it", e.g. verbal and written speech.

[153] *Maṭālib*, 3, 335–6; cf. 3, 349.

[154] *Maṭālib*, 3, 341–58.

[155] *Maṭālib*, 3, 341; *Nihāya*, fol. 198a; cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 63.

istidlālāt)".[156] After citing several such arguments in the *Nihāya*, he writes, "They have other widespread arguments that are too weak, and there is no use in recounting them."[157] Indeed, we need only to examine the discussion surrounding the view that some ethical knowledge is immediate.[158]

Muʿtazilīs argue that knowledge of some ethical truths is immediate and self-evident (*badīhī*) by citing numerous examples.[159] They point out that all rational beings have immediate knowledge, e.g. of: *(a)* the goodness of thanking the benefactor, *(b)* the desert of blame for one who throws a brick that injures another person (and that the thrower of the brick, rather than the brick itself, is to blame), *(c)* the goodness of helping the thirsty blind man in the desert, and *(d)* knowledge of the goodness of truthfulness. Hence, any agent confronted with a choice between truthfulness and lying, where the consequences (this-worldly and otherworldly) for him personally of both choices are absolutely equal, will necessarily choose truthfulness.[160]

In al-Rāzī's earlier works, including the *Ishāra* and *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, he follows a traditional Ashʿarī critical strategy, which is to deny that ethical judgements could constitute immediate knowledge. For instance, he rejects the above Muʿtazilī argument that every agent will prefer to tell the truth over lying since his mind will know immediately that lying is bad and truth-telling good. He argues that this claim cannot be established, and that it is in fact conceivable that the agent would choose lying—there is no evidence to believe otherwise.[161]

In this early stage, he also advances an argument under the indirect influence of Ibn Sīnā (apparently, at this early stage, through al-Ghazālī): that one can distinguish between immediate knowledge and conventional beliefs through a mental leap. According

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[156] *Nihāya*, fol. 199b.

[157] *Nihāya*, fol. 200a.

[158] Arguments for the other view are discussed in: *Maṭālib*, 3, 344–5; 3, 355–8.

[159] Cf. Hourani, *Islamic Rationalism*, 20 ff.

[160] This argument is made by ʿAbd al-Jabbār (*Mughnī*, 6/1, 181 ff., esp. 214–5).

[161] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 263; fol. 267; *Ishāra*, fol. 34b–35a; *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 180–1; *Nihāya*, fol. 201b. Cf. M. Marmura, "A Medieval Argument for the Intrinsic Value of the Moral Act", esp. 123–7, an examination of this Muʿtazilī argument and some classical Ashʿarī refutations thereof.

to Ibn Sīnā, it is possible to conceive mentally, through a process of abstraction, of a pristine state in which one is detached from all acquired dispositions, notions and inclinations. It will then be found that while the mind has immediate knowledge of the truth of the *a priori* (*awwalī*) proposition, '2 is greater than 1', and will not be able to doubt its truth no matter how hard it tries to, it will easily doubt the truth of the proposition, 'Lying is bad', which, by contrast, is a mere widely-accepted statement (*qaḍiyya mashhūra*).[162] In other words, such moral propositions are beliefs that stem from social convention, and do not constitute immediate knowledge.

In anticipation of such objections, the Muʿtazila advance a similar argument: that if we imagine a situation in which the agent is completely free from social conventions and self-centred inclinations, he will still reach these ethical truths and will choose truth-telling over lying. Interestingly, in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl,* al-Rāzī will respond to this argument by going further than all previous critics of the Muʿtazila. He does not only object that it is in fact possible for the agent to choose lying in the imagined situation and that one who examines himself will find that the statement 'Lying is bad' is a mere conventional belief, he also explains why the argument is fundamentally flawed, as follows:

> [The Muʿtazilī] says, "If we assume (*faraḍa*) the above state, we will find ourselves certain about preferring truth-telling over lying". We say: What we find now within ourselves cannot be used as evidence for your contention. For from the time we were born to the present we heard nothing but affirmations that truth-telling is good and lying bad. Thus the badness of lying and the goodness of truth-telling became rooted in our minds. This disposition (*hay'a*) became extremely firm and entrenched, such that although we may assume the disappearance of these dispositions, *they do not disappear by that mere assumption.* Rather, they remain, despite our assumption, as they were. Therefore, with this assumption, we judge truth-telling to be preferable over lying only because our normal dispositions, which remain within us despite our assumption, will determine this preference. However, if we posit a man who is free from all these dispositions, we will not know whether he will prefer good over bad. For we are unable to grasp such a state; *what we are capable of doing is only to assume our selves to be free from those*

[162] *Ishāra*, fol. 35a; *Nihāya*, fol. 198b; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Miʿyār*, 149–50; *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 49; Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt,* 1, 187–8. On al-Ghazālī's borrowing from Ibn Sīnā in this regard, see M. Marmura, "Al-Ghazālī on Ethical Premises", 395; Hourani, "Ghazālī", 81.

> *dispositions, rather than to make them actually free from them.* The experience (*tajriba*) occurring at the assumption of being free [from dispositions] is other than the experience occurring at being truly free [from them]. We experience the former case, though what is conducive to our purpose is the latter. Therefore, this [Muʿtazilī] argument is false.[163]

Muʿtazilīs may posit situations in which an agent acts morally without the interference of any conventions or self-centred motives. Nonetheless, the actual mental leap required to conceive of the situation posited is, according to al-Rāzī, impossible. Therefore, even if one scrutinises these ethical notions in this way, and still finds them indubitable, this will not prove that they constitute knowledge, immediate or otherwise.

Clearly, this stance will equally undermine Ibn Sīnā's method to distinguish widely-accepted statements from statements of *a priori* knowledge. Al-Rāzī cites this method in his very late work *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*: "If I assume (*faraḍa*) myself as if I have just been created, have never interacted with anyone, and have never seen anything, and if I assume (*qaddara*) that the influence of custom and habit (*ilf wa-ʿāda*) is omitted from myself", then when I present to my mind the statements '1 is half of 2' and 'Lying is bad', I will find my mind certain (*jāzim*) in relation to the former, incapable of judgement (*mutawaqqif*) in relation to the latter.[164] This, al-Rāzī here replies, is "a very weak argument"; for the individual's habit, custom and character traits may make some common beliefs as indubitable within the self as *a priori* knowledge. One may scrutinise examples of both types of statements and find no difference in the self's certainty in relation to them. Indeed (as he objects to the Muʿtazilī view), many character traits and acquired habits and notions cannot be omitted merely by assuming the omission.[165]

In his later works, therefore, al-Rāzī puts less emphasis on denying that normative judgements constitute immediate, or self-evident (*badīhī*), knowledge. (By contrast, in his very early *Uṣūl al-dīn*, he states

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[163] *Nihāya*, fol. 201b.

[164] *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 1, 199. The argument originally is in the plural: "If we assume ourselves...".

[165] *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 1, 199–200. This marks a crucial development in al-Rāzī's epistemology generally, not only in his ethical epistemology. As we will see in the final chapter, his contention that it is often impossible to distinguish *a priori* knowledge from conventional belief will contribute to his arrival at a moderate scepticism towards the end of his career.

that the primary concern in the context of ethics should be to refute the Muʿtazilī claim that one knows some moral truths immediately.[166]) This later critical approach will indeed suit his later consequentialism, in which he rejects only the Muʿtazilī theory of the meanings of moral judgements, not the view that these judgements may constitute self-evident knowledge. Thus, that the statement, 'Wrongdoing is bad', is immediately true does not entail that wrongdoing is intrinsically bad because it is wrongdoing. One should ask: Why is this statement true? Is it because wrongdoing is bad in itself? Or because of another reason, e.g. that it somehow leads to harm?

This transition in al-Rāzī's ethics is evident in an argument he presents in the *Maṭālib*. He first cites the classical Ashʿarī objection that self-evident knowledge cannot be disputed by rational people; yet both Ashʿarīs and *falāsifa* deny that acts are good or bad in themselves.[167] He then cites Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī, who responds that though denying immediate knowledge is inconceivable for the multitude of people, it is conceivable for small numbers of people to deny it.[168] All common people (common Ashʿarīs included) hold that beneficence is good and wrongdoing bad, whereas specialist Ashʿarīs, who deny this, are few in number. Al-Rāzī retorts that what is at issue is not whether the majority of people make these judgements, but what meanings (*tafsīr*) these judgements have. He turns Abū l-Ḥusayn's empirical argument against him: that in fact what common people (common Muʿtazilīs included) refer to by ethical value terms, in ordinary language, are benefit and harm—contra a handful of specialist Muʿtazilīs.[169]

The main point of contention is no longer whether one knows the truth of ethical judgements immediately, but what conceptions ethical value terms refer to. Al-Rāzī, therefore, goes beyond the classical Ashʿarī preoccupation with denying the truth of ethical statements of assent towards analysing the value conceptions that constitute these statements. He presents a more sophisticated criticism of Muʿtazilī ethical realism without undermining his own consequentialism.

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[166] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 264.

[167] *Maṭālib*, 3, 351. The argument can be found in al-Rāzī's early *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 262; al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 229–30; al-Mutawallī, *Mughnī*, 43; al-Ghazālī, *Mustaṣfā*, 1, 57. Cf. Hourani, "Ghazālī", 81–2.

[168] Cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 23.

[169] *Maṭālib*, 3, 351–2.

Al-Rāzī's most thorough critical analysis of value conceptions can be found in the beginning of his discussion of ethics in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl.* He examines the definitions that the Muʿtazila present for the central ethical value terms:

> Abū l-Ḥusayn says: "'Bad' is what one who is capable of performing it and who knows its badness may not perform (*laysa la-hu an yafʿalah*). Our saying, 'He may not perform it', is known by reason and does not require explanation. This entails that he will deserve blame for performing it. It is also defined as what has an attribute that is effective with respect to the desert (*istiḥqāq*) of blame."...
>
> In defining 'good', he says that it is "what one who is capable of performing it and who knows its [moral] status may perform".[170]

Al-Rāzī asks: What does saying, "one 'may' (*la-hu*)[171] or 'may not' perform a particular act", mean? It could have a number of senses, including: (1) permission for, or prohibition against, performing it; (2) capability or inability to perform it; (3) a certain attribute of the agent, as we say of a body that it has (*la-hu*) the attributes 'blackness' and 'motion'; (4) the act's being good or bad, which entails that the agent may or may not perform it accordingly; and (5) some sort of permission or prohibition that issues from unaided reason. Yet the first sense will result in a divine command notion of moral value, which Abū l-Ḥusayn does not intend. The second and third are obviously not intended. The fourth is a tautology. In the fifth, if rational prohibition is other than the agent's desert of blame or punishment (as in the second definition), then what is it exactly? What else, al-Rāzī adds, could '*la-hu*' here possibly mean? This crucial element in Abū l-Ḥusayn's definition appears meaningless and renders the whole definition meaningless.

The thrust of al-Rāzī's argument is that rights and duties depend on the moral status of acts. One would normally answer the questions, "What may I do?", "What ought I to do?", "What ought I not to do?", etc., by reference to what is good or bad, but not vice versa. To say that the bad is what one may not do presupposes that one knows what one may not do and why one may not do it. Yet knowing 'why one may not do it' is to know why it is bad; al-Rāzī

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[170] *Nihāya*, fol. 193b–194a; cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 132–6; al-Baṣrī, *Muʿtamad*, 1, 363–69.

[171] '*La-hu*' is difficult to translate into English while preserving its various senses and connotations. I find 'may' preferable to 'has the right to', or 'is entitled to'.

points out that Abū l-Ḥusayn commits circularity by including the agent's knowing the goodness and badness of acts in his definitions of ethical value terms.[172]

Al-Rāzī then turns to the second (and more common) Muʿtazilī definition of ethical value, in terms of 'desert' (*istiḥqāq*) of praise or blame. The term '*istiḥqāq*', he argues, is derived from '*ḥaqq*', which, in Ibn al-Malāḥimī's book of definitions, is given a number of senses depending on context: *(a)* the lexical meaning of '*ḥaqq*' is 'what is true and real (*thābit*)'; *(b)* in the conventional idiom of ordinary usage (*ʿurf*), it refers to correct belief and truthful statement; *(c)* in religious Legal convention (*ʿurf al-sharʿ*), it refers to each circumstance of the agent that will make it good for him to produce a certain act. The first and last senses cannot be intended by 'desert' in the Muʿtazilī definitions of 'good' and 'bad'. By interpreting 'desert' according to the second sense, goodness will be defined in terms of goodness, and Abū l-Ḥusayn will fall again into circularity.[173]

Al-Rāzī concludes that despite their claims that the conceptions of moral value terms are self-evident and known immediately to the mind, the Muʿtazila fail to define them. As their notions of ethical value are incomprehensible, their ethical realism as a whole will appear profoundly irrational.

Whence, his main criticism of Muʿtazilī ethical epistemology in the *Maṭālib* and *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*. Though he accepts that knowledge of the goodness or badness of some acts is indeed immediate, he argues that a statement of assertion (*taṣdīq*) will require prior conception (*taṣawwur*) of both its subject and predicate.[174] If the words 'good' and 'bad' in the statements, 'Beneficence is good' and 'Wrongdoing is bad', refer to favourableness and unfavourableness to the self, then

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[172] ʿAbd al-Jabbār defines 'bad' as 'what the agent deserves blame for' (*Mughnī*, 6/1, 7; 6/1, 26–7) and rejects defining it as 'what the agent may not perform' since: *(a)* there are bad acts that one cannot avoid performing, e.g. the acts of the child and the sleeper (these further highlight the ambiguity of the phrase, '*laysa lahu an yafʿalah*'); *(b)* knowledge that the agent may not perform an act is more properly an entailment (*ka-l-tābiʿ*) of its badness (cf. al-Rāzī's objection); and *(c)* this definition "does not unveil what [the act] is bad on account of, and does not draw attention to the judgement (*ḥukm*) connected to it", viz. the desert of blame.

[173] *Nihāya*, fol. 194a–b.

[174] Cf. *Muḥaṣṣal*, 81; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 1b–2a.

these conceptions are indeed self-evident and known by the agent immediately. However:

> If [Muʿtazilīs] intend, by beneficence being good and wrongdoing being bad, something other than the consideration of benefit and harm, then that is not conceived (*mutaṣawwar*), let alone being asserted (*muṣaddaq bih*), or the assertion of it being self-evident.[175]

It is the conception of value terms, such as 'good' and 'bad', that is at issue. If one examines these conceptions, one will be able to conceive of them in terms of pleasure and pain, but, as we saw, not in any objective sense. This key criticism of Muʿtazilī ethical realism captures the essential distinction between the ethical theories of al-Rāzī and the Muʿtazila: it is "the station of truth that the intelligent critical investigator ought to contemplate, so that the truth in this topic becomes manifest to him".[176] Instructively, this criticism immediately follows his dismissal of classical Ashʿarī refutations of absolutist ethics as being misinformed, and it introduces an account of his own alternative, viz. his consequentialist conceptions of ethical value.

In another argument, al-Rāzī examines the conception of the subject of such statements as 'Wrongdoing is bad'. He quotes Abū l-Ḥusayn's *Ghurar al-adilla*[177] on its definition:

> "Our masters have said: Pains become good if they have certain conditions. These include [1] that they be deserved; [2] that they [lead to] a benefit that preponderates over the pain; [3] that they involve averting a greater harm; [4] that they be supposed to [lead to] benefit and the averting of harm; [5] that they be performed for the purpose of averting [harms];[178] and [6] that they be performed by way of habit, or they be considered as performed by other [than the immediate agent].[179] So, if pain has any of these conditions, it will become good, rather than wrongdoing. If it has none, it will be wrongdoing. Therefore, we

175 *Maṭālib*, 3, 347–8; cf. *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 1, 201; 1, 237.

176 *Maṭālib*, 3, 348.

177 The edition of the *Maṭālib* has *al-Qudar*, instead of *al-Ghurar*.

178 This seems to concern harm directed at others, whereas the third condition concerns harm directed at oneself.

179 An example of number 6 is one who places an infant into snow. Although the pain suffered by the infant from the coldness of the snow will be either created by God immediately or generated from the coldness of the snow, the responsibility for the pain will be that of the human agent. God's preservation of natural habit will still be good.

> have restricted wrongdoing to being [1] undeserved harm, [2] [not leading to] a preponderant benefit, [etc.]..."[180]

Only after knowing all these complex details, after a process of subtle and specialised speculation, will one grasp the complex conception of wrongdoing. However, al-Rāzī objects:

> The *mutakallimūn* are unanimous on that whenever knowledge of the principle (*aṣl*) is discursive (*naẓarī*), it will be inconceivable for derivative knowledge (*farʿ*) to be immediate. Knowledge of the essence of wrongdoing is undoubtedly a principle for knowledge that it is bad. Knowledge of the essence of wrongdoing can only be attained through this definition that only critical investigators can conceptualise by the means of intricate speculation. Since knowledge of this principle is discursive, it will be inconceivable for knowledge that wrongdoing is bad to be self-evident.[181]

In other words, it follows from the Muʿtazilī claim (that such ethical statements are self-evidently and immediately true) that one who states, 'Wrongdoing is bad', without having a conception of 'wrongdoing', will effectively be saying: 'Wrongdoing, which I do not know what it is, is self-evidently bad'. If the conception itself is unknown, then no attributes of it can be self-evident. For self-evident assertion requires only the presence of the two conceptions of subject and predicate in the mind, and will follow from their presence immediately, without syllogistic intermediation. If at least one of these conceptions is not present in the mind, the truth of any statement of assertion that involves both cannot possibly be known self-evidently.

The Muʿtazilī may then modify his position by contending that the badness of wrongdoing will be known immediately by one who already conceives the essence of wrongdoing, not by everyone. This, according to al-Rāzī, will be to admit that the badness of wrongdoing is not self-evident universally for all rational humans, as the Muʿtazila originally claim. And indeed he rejects even this modified position.[182]

Lastly, al-Rāzī also cites the Muʿtazilī argument that "when we

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[180] *Maṭālib*, 3, 353; cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 13, 298. On Muʿtazilī views on how the infliction of pain becomes bad, cf. M. Heemskirk, *Suffering in the Muʿtazilite Theology*, 122 ff.

[181] *Maṭālib*, 3, 354; cf. *Nihāya*, fol. 198b.

[182] *Maṭālib*, 3, 354–5.

know [the act] to be wrongdoing, we will know that it is bad, even if we are heedless of all other considerations; therefore, the ground (*ʿilla*) for this badness has to be wrongdoing".[183] Wrongdoing is the ground (*muqtaḍī*) for the badness of wrongdoing, since "knowledge of badness is coextensive (*dāʾir*), both affirmatively and negatively, with knowledge of [the act] being wrongdoing".[184] He objects that the concomitance of two notions is not evidence for a direct causal link (*ʿilliyya*) between them. Indeed, the ground of the concomitance of the conceptions 'wrongdoing' and 'bad' may be something other than 'wrongdoing' itself, e.g. sensations of pain and pleasure within the agent's experience of actual instances of wrongdoing.

God and Ethics

In the beginning of his discussion of ethics in the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī writes:

> The Muʿtazila and the Karrāmiyya are unanimous on the affirmation of ethical rationalism (*taḥsīn al-ʿaql wa-taqbīḥih*), while the *falāsifa* and the Determinists are unanimous on denying it. Our position is that it applies to human beings, but does not apply to God.[185]

The ultimate concern of al-Rāzī's *kalām* discussions of ethics is the ethical status of God's acts, more so than human acts. Yet, as mentioned, the analysis focuses more on the more fathomable 'observable' human level, before finally moving to the 'unobservable', supra-human level. In Chapter 1, we saw that al-Rāzī develops a theory of human action and motivation, concluding that divine action cannot follow from similar processes. As such, his view of the ethical status of divine action is in overall agreement with the central Ashʿarī doctrine that no cognitive ethical judgements can be made in relation to God, and that He is not under any obligation to perform, omit, command or prohibit any acts. Previous Ashʿarīs based this view on their anti-realism and voluntarism: 'good' and 'bad' refer not to real attributes of acts, but to divine command

[183] *Maṭālib*, 3, 355.
[184] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 171.
[185] *Maṭālib*, 3, 289.

and prohibition. Al-Rāzī, by contrast, bases it on his anti-realism and consequentialism.[186]

The Problem of Divine Motivation

The motive to perform or omit a certain act will ultimately involve an expectation of a preponderant benefit or harm, and hence of the experience of a preponderant pleasure or pain. According to al-Rāzī and classical Ashʿarīs, since God does not experience pleasure or pain, it will be inconceivable for Him to be subject to prudential or pleasure-seeking considerations. His acts and commands, therefore, cannot follow from motives.[187]

Moreover, whoever acts for an objective (*gharaḍ*), i.e. with a motive, will be seeking to be perfected (*mustakmal*) by it, and will be imperfect in himself; however, God is absolutely perfect. It may be objected that though performing or omitting an act will be on a par for God Himself, He may perform the act for the benefit of humans. Yet, since al-Rāzī denies that beneficence can in itself constitute a motive, he simply reiterates that if the performance and omission of such an act are absolutely on a par for God, He will not have a motive to perform it. Otherwise, it would follow that, by benefiting humans, God would aim to perfect Himself.[188]

Also, al-Rāzī rejects the notion that the objective of divine action and command is to realise the advantage and wellbeing of humans, because God is able to create pleasure in humans immediately. It follows that the intermediation of His acts and commands will be superfluous and vain (*ʿabath*).[189]

According to al-Rāzī, God may choose to benefit some, all, or

[186] This general stance does not appear to be entirely novel (cf. al-Juwaynī, *Niẓāmiyya*, 26–7; al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 174–7; Ibn Sīnā, *Risāla fī l-qaḍā' wa-l-qadar*, dedicated to refuting Muʿtazilī ethics, theodicy and doctrine of free human choice). But al-Rāzī's treatment is much more developed.

[187] Cf. al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 30–1.

[188] Cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 185–7; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 156a–b; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 483; *Arbaʿīn*, 249–53; *Khamsūn*, 61–3; *Maʿālim*, 87–8; *Maṭālib*, 3, 290–1. Al-Ṭūsī (*Talkhīṣ*, 205) comments that al-Rāzī takes the view that whoever acts for an objective is perfected by it from the *falāsifa*, but uses it in a different context. Also, part of the background to this doctrine, though of secondary importance, is Ibn Sīnā's view that higher causes never act for the sake of lower entities (cf. *Najāt*, 304–8; 320; *Shifā', Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 393–5; 2, 414–5; *Ishārāt*, 3, 150; 154–5).

[189] E.g. *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 188; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 483.

no humans. He may communicate to them the courses of action that He chooses for Himself, including rewards and punishments promised for human acts and omissions. But His choice will be absolutely free and neither directed at ends, nor subject to moral guidelines. His acts and commands are not teleological, though not vain either.[190] Al-Rāzī seems to reach a point where the nature of divine action becomes very much an unfathomable mystery. We do not understand why God acts and commands. Nor do we understand how God chooses to act and to command, especially that al-Rāzī will deny the divine attribute of will.

In one *kalām* work, he writes, "It is inconceivable for God to do something for an objective, contra the Muʿtazila and most jurists".[191] This reference to jurists draws attention to one of the most serious problems that transpire from this doctrine, which concerns the relation of divine command to human wellbeing. Is there an ethical rationale in divine command? And how could this doctrine be reconciled with al-Rāzī's foregoing contention that Revelation serves human advantage?

In *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, he notes that despite this theological position, most divine commands do in fact accord with human wellbeing.[192] The reader is then referred to a closer treatment of the problem in his work on the principles of jurisprudence the *Maḥṣūl*, which we indeed find in the context of establishing the principles for the Legal method of analogy (*qiyās*).

Al-Rāzī considers three definitions for the 'Legal ground' (*ʿilla sharʿiyya*), central to the method of *qiyās*: *(a)* it could somehow be a cause (*mu'aththir, mūjib*) for establishing a ruling, or *(b)* a motive (*dāʿī*) for it, or *(c)* it could merely indicate (*muʿarrif*) it.[193] He rejects the first for a number of reasons; e.g. that revealed rulings are God's pre-eternal, uncaused speech, which is not affected by any factors (such as the intoxicating property of wine). He rejects the second definition, since God cannot be motivated in His action and command. He then accepts the third definition for the 'ground', as the aspect (*waṣf*) of the act, which functions as a ratio (*sabab*) for indicating that

[190] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 483.

[191] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 483; cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 249.

[192] *Nihāya*, fol. 200b.

[193] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 179–90; cf. the good commentary by al-Iṣfahānī, *Kāshif*, 6, 289–301.

a particular Legal judgement applies to the act.[194] This last notion of the Legal ground is non-theological; a ground tells us something about the contents and implications of scriptural texts, but nothing about their source. Scriptural rulings provide knowledge of human conduct, but not of divine nature. The first two definitions, by contrast, rest on theories of why God commands and prohibits certain acts, viz. that God is either motivated or necessitated to establish scriptural rulings in the form in which we have them.

Grounds are of several types. Some, for instance, are specified more or less explicitly in scripture, where it is stated that a given act is commanded or prohibited for the sake of (*min ajli*), or for (*li-*), a certain reason.[195] These are straightforward scriptural indications of rulings, which fit the above definition of the Legal ground easily. However, another, more problematic type includes grounds based on the previously-discussed principle of convenience (*munāsaba*), which concerns the consequences of acts. Al-Rāzī dedicates a lengthy section in the *Maḥṣūl* to establishing the validity of convenience as a Legal ground without implying that it is based on divine motivation. One may argue as follows: God establishes Legal rulings for human benefit; we observe that ruling *x* serves benefit *y*; therefore, the presumption (*ẓann*) that 'ruling *x* is established for the sake of benefit *y*' will follow. Obviously, the most problematic part of the argument is the premise, 'God establishes Legal rulings for human benefit'. Al-Rāzī notes that jurists absolutely reject explaining '*for* human benefit' as '*with the objective* (*gharaḍ*) of realising human benefit', although both phrases have the same meaning. There is no real difference, therefore, between their position and that of the Muʿtazila, who proclaim explicitly both that God is obligated not to perform bad acts nor to make bad commands, and that He is motivated to deliver advantages to men. Jurists also assert that "although God is not obligated to consider [human] benefits, He does what is beneficial for His servants only out of favour (*tafaḍḍul*) and beneficence (*iḥsān*),

[194] Al-Rāzī gives the example of fornication, which is the ratio for the desert of punishment. The link between act and punishment is based on divine command: "Whenever you see a man fornicating, then know that I have made it obligatory (*awjabtu*) that he be punished". So fornication merely indicates the applicability of punishment, but does not cause it (*Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 139–40).

[195] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 191 ff.

rather than obligation (*wujūb*)".[196] In refuting this argument for the validity of the principle of convenience, al-Rāzī argues at length against this problematic premise in particular; for God's commands and acts cannot be aimed at human benefits.[197]

In the *Maḥṣūl*, he presents the following alternative theological basis for the validity of the principle of convenience:

> We accept that God's acts and rulings are not explainable by motives and objectives. Nevertheless, we assert that convenience provides a basis for the presumption of grounds. This is so, since the position of Muslims is that the rotation of the spheres, the rising and setting of constellations, and their persistence upon their forms and luminescence, are not necessary (*wājib*), but that since God, exalted, preserves His custom (*ʿāda*) by sustaining them upon a uniform state, there will undoubtedly follow the presumption that they will remain tomorrow and the day after tomorrow upon these attributes. The same is true in the cases of the fall of rain at (*ʿinda*) [the formation of] humid clouds, satiation after eating, quenching of thirst after drinking, and burning from contact with fire. Yet since custom persists continuously in this manner, there will undoubtedly follow a presumption, verging on certainty, that they will persist in their normal courses (*minhāj*). In short, the repetition of one thing many times will entail the presumption that whenever it occurs, it will only occur according to specific aspects.
>
> Therefore, when we examine revealed laws (*sharāʾiʿ*), we will find rulings and benefits concomitant and inseparable. This is known after [examining] the various aspects of revealed laws inductively. Therefore, knowing the occurrence of either will entail presuming the occurrence of the other, and vice versa, without either being a cause (*muʾaththir*) for the other, or a motive for it. Therefore, convenience is [valid] evidence for Legal grounds, though it is denied absolutely that God's rulings may be explainable by recourse to objectives.[198]

Al-Rāzī compares divine command to divine action: the Law to the created world. As one can detect a divinely-sustained uniformity in the behaviour of created things, which is empirically qualifiable and quantifiable, one will find a comparable uniformity in scriptural rulings. Neither observation, according to al-Rāzī, will entail that God is motivated or necessitated (logically, metaphysically, or ethically). That scriptural rulings generally serve human wellbeing does not entail that God commands for the sake of human benefit, whether out of duty or favour. Nonetheless, this observation will

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[196] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 237–46.
[197] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 248–71.
[198] *Maḥṣūl*, 2/2, 246–7.

allow humans to derive general teleological principles inductively from scriptural rulings; hence, the validity of Legal *qiyās* using the principle of convenience.

Objections to Muʿtazilī Theological Ethics

The Muʿtazila developed highly elaborate doctrines on the ethical goodness of God's acts (including creation, obligating humans (*taklīf*) and afterlife reward and punishment), which they maintain to be cognizable. Their critics confront them with a wide range of arguments, mostly unsystematic sceptical and topical ones that take the form of analogical, parable-like and situational arguments *ad hominem* (*ilzām*). These were commonly used by classical Ashʿarīs (the best-known being al-Ashʿarī's own three brothers problem, which he advanced against Abū ʿAlī al-Jubbāʾī[199]), as well as the *falāsifa*, most notably Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Ibn Sīnā.[200] Let it suffice here to provide some representative examples of the arguments that al-Rāzī uses.

One argument in the *Maṭālib* addresses the Muʿtazilī notion of divine beneficence (*inʿām, iḥsān*).[201] Al-Rāzī argues that an act is said to be an act of beneficence only when the recipient of benefit has prior need and desire for it. A dog will find pleasure in a bone, but has no use for a precious necklace. Yet benefit is connected ultimately to the recipient's conscious experiences, and is subjectively measurable in terms of the amount and quality of the pleasure experienced, or the pain alleviated, rather than in terms of external things, which one can accumulate unlimitedly. Therefore, a person's potential for experiencing pleasure will be delimited by psychological factors, which are in turn determined by the nature and extent of his needs and desires. One cannot experience pleasure without having prior need and desire for it.

Yet need and desire, al-Rāzī argues, are imperfections in an entity and in themselves harms and sources of pain and anguish to it.[202] If

[199] See my forthcoming article on the debate between al-Ashʿarī and al-Jubbāʾī on this problem, and on al-Rāzī's use thereof.

[200] Esp. Ibn Sīnā, *Risāla fī l-qaḍāʾ wa-l-qadar*, from which al-Rāzī seems to borrow one argument (*Maṭālib*, 3, 317).

[201] *Maṭālib*, 3, 291–6.

[202] *Maṭālib*, 3, 293–4; cf. p. 156 ff. *infra*.

God creates man with numerous imperfections, then bestows upon him commensurate pleasures, then (according to Muʿtazilī ethics) the whole affair will appear, at best, futile (*ʿabath*) and thus bad and unwise, rather than beneficent; for the Muʿtazila hold that an act of beneficence will involve bestowing a preponderant benefit upon the recipient. They cannot argue that God may bestow upon the individual benefits that are greater than the harms caused by his needs and desires; for the maximum benefit one may receive will be commensurate with (never more than) his needs and desires.[203]

Another argument put forward concerns the Muʿtazilī doctrine of the goodness of God's obligating (*taklīf*) men to perform certain acts.[204] How can the Muʿtazila justify God's obligating men to know, praise and thank Him, when to achieve such knowledge is extremely difficult and practically impossible for most men? Moreover, God Himself does not benefit when humans know, thank and praise Him. Nor are these arduous acts necessary means to human benefit; for God can deliver all benefits to all humans without them. Therefore, by Muʿtazilī ethical standards, obligating humans will be futile, and hence bad.[205]

Al-Rāzī challenges the Muʿtazilī notion of obligation also by referring to God's promise of afterlife reward for obedience and threat of punishment for disobedience. When a man obligates another to do and omit certain acts in return for benefits he bestows upon him, he will be considered a vile and lowly person. However, when these acts and omissions are beneficial to neither person, but may result in punishment or rewards for the obligated person, the obligator, according to Muʿtazilī ethics, will clearly be a wrongdoer. The Muʿtazila cannot escape making the same judgement in relation to God's acts.

Among the more analogical problems is one that al-Rāzī cites from a debate between Abū Bakr al-Rāzī and Abū l-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī, the Baghdādī Muʿtazilī, who was reportedly unable to reply to arguments put to him on theodicy and the nature of divine justice (*taʿdīl*

[203] *Maṭālib*, 3, 295–6.

[204] *Maṭālib*, 3, 298–304; cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 363–98; 2/2, 257–8; 2/2, 260–2; *Nihāya*, fol. 202b.

[205] On the badness of futile action according to Muʿtazilī ethics, see Oliver Leaman, "ʿAbd al-Jabbar and the Concept of Uselessness".

wa-tajwīr).[206] Abū Bakr al-Rāzī argues that if a man teaches his son swimming, then obligates him to swim across a river, knowing that the son will choose to quit swimming in the middle of the river and drown, he will be inconsiderate of the wellbeing of his son. Al-Kaʿbī seems to reply that the correct analogy (*mithāl*) for the God-man relationship is that the father has many sons, whom he commands to cross to the other bank in order for each to attain a benefit, knowing that only some will choose to drown. Yet, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī retorts, this would be the correct analogy of the God-man relationship only if it fulfils a number of conditions, e.g. (1) that the father is not responsible for their initial need for that benefit; (2) that, if he knows with certainty who will choose to drown, he will be unable to exclude them from the command; and (3) that he is ignorant of the fact that there will ultimately be greater overall harm than benefit, since only a minority will cross safely.[207]

Muʿtazilīs may respond by affirming that God creates men with free will and gives them the ability to believe and do good before He obligates them. However, al-Rāzī develops Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's problem and contends that believers and disbelievers are not given equal opportunities; for people vary psychologically and in their circumstances, which, undeniably, will at least make some outcomes more probable than others. Moreover, what would the Muʿtazila say of a disbeliever who suffers poverty, blindness, calamities and pains in this life, only to find himself in the lowest pit in hell afterwards? Did God somehow intend to benefit this man, as they claim?

Finally, al-Rāzī defends the doctrine of 'obligating what is above capacity' (*taklīf mā lā yuṭāq*), which utterly contradicts the view that God is motivated to benefit humans. He argues that it is conceivable for God to obligate humans to do what is above their capacity. For instance, He obligates all humans to become believers, yet He states in the Qur'ān that some (most notably Abū Lahab, an enemy of the Prophet) will never believe. As such, they are commanded to

[206] *Maṭālib*, 3, 318–20; 4, 419. On the debate between al-Kaʿbī and Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, cf. the latter's *Rasāʾil*, 167–8; Mahdi Mohaghegh, *Fīlsūf-i-Rayy*, 31–5. On al-Kaʿbī, see "Abu 'l-Qāsem al-Balk̲ī al-Kaʿbī", *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

[207] Though Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's cited problem is primarily topical, it also supports his denial of God's responsibility for the great evils abundant in this world. Since He too accepts a type of ethical objectivism, he does not find any justification for the act of creating such a bad world that could make it a good act fit for a good deity (cf. p. 168–9 *infra*).

believe that they will actually never believe, which is inconceivable and above their capacity.[208]

God's Truthfulness

Having rejected ethical objectivism, the Ashʿarīs still had to address one crucial and unavoidable problem. They needed to prove that God is truthful, and that revelation does not contain untruth, without appealing to the authority of revelation itself, which would lead to circularity and a fideism that no serious Muslim theologian (pre-modern, at least) would admit. It would seem, as the Muʿtazila argue, that one has to accept that lying is intrinsically bad.[209] Classical Ashʿarīs, however, attempted a non-ethical, theological proof of divine truthfulness.

Al-Bāqillānī argued that God's speech is truthful, not because lying is morally bad, but because truthfulness is an attribute of His essence.[210] Similarly, al-Rāzī writes in his earliest *kalām* work:

> [The Muʿtazila] say: "If reason is incapable of making [judgements of] goodness and badness, it will be possible for God to lie in his speech, without it being bad". We say: 'Good' and 'bad' are attributes of acts, whereas God's speech is an attribute of His essence, which is pre-eternal and attributed with neither goodness nor badness.[211]

Therefore, if God's speech were untruthful, it would entail an imperfection (*naqṣ*) in His essence, which is inconceivable.

Al-Rāzī also quotes Abū Isḥāq al-Isfarāʾīnī's argument that "the speech within the self (*kalām nafsī*) relates to a thing in accordance with the knowledge of [that thing]; therefore, it cannot contain lying".[212]

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[208] *Maḥṣūl*, 1/2, 378–80; *Arbaʿīn*, 237; *Munāẓarāt*, 51–2; *Tafsīr*, 2, 42 ff.; *Maʿālim*, 85–6; *Maṭālib*, 3, 305–15. Cf. al-Ashʿarī, *Ibāna*, 195; al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 203–4. One commentator (al-Iṣfahānī, *Kāshif*, 4, 3) writes: "Al-Juwaynī writes, in the *Shāmil*, that what most of the answers of our shaykh ... al-Ashʿarī ... are inclined to, and what those knowledgeable among his companions have adopted, is that obligating the impossible (*muḥāl*) is rationally conceivable, and so is obligating something and determining the constant obstruction from it".

[209] Cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 6/1, 67.

[210] "Lying is inconceivable in relation to God, not because of [its] badness (*qubḥ*), but because of its impossibility in relation to Him by rational evidence" (al-Bāqillānī, *Tamhīd*, 343; 105).

[211] *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 268.

[212] *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 109; cf. al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 278–82; al-Kiyā al-Harrāsī, *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 140b.

After al-Isfarā'īnī, his student al-Juwaynī advanced a rigorous defence of the Ashʿarī position on this problem, which al-Rāzī develops further in his later works.

In *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, he cites the traditional argument:

> [God's] speech subsists (*qā'im*) in His self. Lying is inconceivable in the speech of the self (*kalām al-nafs*) in the case of one in whom ignorance is inconceivable, since a statement (*khabar*) will subsist in the self in accordance with knowledge. Yet ignorance is inconceivable in relation to God.[213]

But could one who is not ignorant have an untruthful statement in his self (*khabar nafsānī*)? Following al-Isfarā'īnī, al-Rāzī responds that when one knows something, it will be inconceivable for him to have an untruthful statement in his self about it. One can easily imagine an untruthful *verbal* statement (e.g. the English statement, 'The world is pre-eternal', or its Arabic equivalent). But one cannot imagine having an untruthful statement within the self (i.e. the non-verbal 'statement' that the verbal statement expresses) about something that one knows (hence, if I know that the world is temporally originated, I can state, 'The world is pre-eternal', without being convinced in it).

The more serious problem is: could one who has a truthful statement in his self not produce verbal lies? How does one know that the statements of *revealed* scripture do not contain untruth? There does not appear to be a necessary link between knowledge, or speech within the self, and the truthfulness of verbal speech. Whatever I have in my mind, I can still *choose* to utter a lie; and so can God if He is a voluntary agent. Al-Rāzī here responds that the problem of the truthfulness of God's speech is similar to the problem of the truthfulness of the messenger.[214] He refers us to his discussion of human action, where he cites the Muʿtazilī argument that if God created human acts, including bad ones, He might create miracles at the hands of impostors as well as messengers. Al-Rāzī cites al-Juwaynī's response that if one knows that the producer of a supernatural event on the hands of the claimant of messengership is God, one will have an immediate knowledge that the claimant is truthful. For doubt enters only into whether the event is a divine act, rather than whether God

[213] *Nihāya*, fol. 134b; cf. 134b–136a; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 434.
[214] *Nihāya*, fol. 135b.

creates it in support of the truth-teller.[215] Al-Rāzī adds to al-Juwaynī's argument, that though the latter contention is inductive, one will know its truth immediately and with certainty; for the contrary possibility (that God creates miracles at the hands of an impostor) will be so improbable to the extent of being inconceivable.[216] However, his account of the argument is brief, and seems to refer the reader to al-Juwaynī's books.

Al-Juwaynī argues that a necessary condition for a genuine prophetic miracle is that it be immediately preceded by the prophet's proclamation that he will perform the following miraculous act to prove his messengership. Muʿtazilīs object that Ashʿarīs fail to prove that God would not create such miracles at the hands of impostors. In reply, al-Juwaynī proposes the following analogy. A person claims, in front of a royal assembly, to be the king's spokesman. He then asks the king to break his habit of remaining seated, and to stand up in confirmation of his claim. If the king does that, his unusual act will confirm the claim; and it will not occur to anyone in the audience that the king stood up in order to mislead them.[217]

However, from al-Rāzī's point of view, this conclusion will only provide conviction beyond reasonable doubt, yet not certainty, in the truthfulness of the claimant of messengership, who supports his claims with supernatural acts; for the simultaneity of the claim and the king's act could be coincidental. The king could have stood up for an unrelated reason. Al-Juwaynī neither addresses this possibility, nor attempts to stress the conclusiveness of his conclusion. Al-Rāzī does. But he considers that though this possibility is conceivable in principle, it is actually impossible: "Thus, conclusiveness (*al-qaṭʿ wa-l-jazm*) may be realised, though there may be this possibility (*tajwīz*)".[218]

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[215] Muʿtazilī objection: *Nihāya*, fol. 86a; al-Rāzī's reply: *Nihāya*, fol. 92a–b. Cf. al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 257–82.

[216] Al-Rāzī explains: "If I close my eyes for a moment, then open them, I will know for certain that God is capable of turning the walls into gold during that moment, and then, when opening my eyes, returning them as they were. This possibility will not undermine the immediate knowledge that that did not take place. The same is true of all customary events. ... Therefore, the possibility of things and events departing from their normal courses (*majārī-hā al-ʿādiyya*) does not undermine the immediate knowledge that they will continue upon their courses" (*Nihāya*, fol. 92b).

[217] Al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 275; cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 317; *Maṭālib*, 8, 61–4 (where al-Rāzī does not consider it to be a strong argument).

[218] *Maṭālib*, 8, 97–9. Cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 324; *Nihāya*, fol. 92b.

Perhaps this conclusiveness can thereby reach the level of certainty (*yaqīn*).

The obvious link between this argument for how a miracle proves messengership and proving the truthfulness of God's speech is that though it is theoretically conceivable for God to mislead men (in speech or action, by creating miracles at the hands of impostors), this is a trivial possibility: it is actually inconceivable that He would do so. The thrust of this defence seems to be that lying is an extremely trivial, lowly and ignoble act that an agent would resort to only because of his weakness, and for which he may be viewed with contempt. Lying contradicts God's absolute power and majesty, affirmed by Ashʿarīs, without being considered intrinsically bad. A sensible person, therefore, may doubt whether a certain claimant of messengership is a true messenger of God; however, once he has verified that he is, he will not have any doubts as to the veracity of his message, i.e. of both God's speech that he communicates and his communication thereof.

Al-Juwaynī develops a rather complex defence for the truthfulness of messengership, partly because he rejects the argument that lying is inconceivable in divine speech since it constitutes an imperfection. He considers this to admit a type of ethical objectivism.[219] By contrast, al-Rāzī fully endorses this stance, which he relies on in his later works. He writes in the *Muḥaṣṣal*: "The statement (*khabar*) of God is truthful because lying is an imperfection; and [imperfection] is inconceivable in relation to God."[220] And in the *Maṭālib*: "That lying is inconceivable in relation to God, exalted, is known immediately, since it is an attribute of imperfection; and [human] primordial nature testifies (*shahādat al-fiṭra*) that attributes of imperfection are inconceivable in relation to God, exalted".[221]

Thus, returning to the early Ashʿarī argument, expressed by al-Bāqillānī, al-Rāzī maintains that lying implies an imperfection of essence in the agent, though, as an act, it is not intrinsically bad. This solution, from a perfectionist angle, to the problem of divine truthfulness brings us to the subject of the next chapter.

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[219] Al-Juwaynī, *Irshād*, 279.
[220] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 434; cf. *Tafsīr*, 3, 143.
[221] *Maṭālib*, 8, 99–100.

CHAPTER THREE

AL-RĀZĪ'S PERFECTIONIST THEORY OF VIRTUE

Perfectionism

Referring to the consequentialist and Legal senses of value terms, Ibn Taymiyya, one of al-Rāzī's most outspoken critics, writes:

> There are some who affirm a third sense for 'good' and 'bad', and claim that there is unanimity over it, viz. the act's being an attribute of perfection or an attribute of imperfection. This sense was not mentioned by the majority of early *mutakallimūn* in this context, but was mentioned by some later ones, such as al-Rāzī, who took it from the *falāsifa*.[1]

Al-Rāzī is indeed the first theologian to juxtapose these three definitions of value terms in such a succinct manner. This appears in a work as early as the *Ishāra*, where he writes that 'good' and 'bad',

> ... also designate attributes of perfection (*kamāl*) and imperfection (*nuqṣān*). So it is said, 'Knowledge is good; ignorance is bad'. By 'perfection', we mean that a thing has something it is supposed to have (*wujūd shay' li-shay' min sha'nih an yakūna lahu*), with respect to its species, type, or essence.[2]

The same listing of the three definitions is also found in his later works.[3] Though it is unprecedented in *kalām* to list these contrasting definitions of value terms in this way, this third definition seems related partly to a sense that classical Ash'arīs recognised in a main class of value terms as used in ordinary language and some technical contexts. Nonetheless, as we have seen, they explained this sense as being descriptive of non-moral facts about beings, and often appealed to it in explaining divine attributes, such as justice and wisdom.[4] Thus, Ibn Taymiyya appears to be right in his remark that this third definition represents a *falsafī* influence.

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[1] Ibn Taymiyya, *Iḥtijāj*, 2, 104.
[2] *Ishāra*, fol. 32b.
[3] E.g. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 159; *Nihāya*, fol. 195a; *Arba'īn*, 246; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 479.
[4] See p. 50–1 *supra*.

Earlier than the *Ishāra*, in *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, al-Rāzī accepts the above classical Ashʿarī stance concerning this class of value terms, as well as classical Ashʿarī voluntarism (the doctrine that value terms could be defined only in terms of divine command). Though soon afterwards he abandons the latter doctrine in favour of consequentialist ethics, the emphasis in both the *Ishāra* and *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl* is on acts, whereas the third definition of value terms, in terms of perfection, which he lists, remains unconnected to a moral stance. This is due to al-Rāzī's acceptance in these early works of the common classical *kalām* doctrine that the essence of man is purely physical, and consequently his rejection of both the possibility of human perfection and the notion of intellectual pleasure (*ladhdha ʿaqliyya*).[5] According to Ibn Sīnā, man experiences this pleasure at a supra-corporeal level upon attainment of theoretical perfection. Instead, he presents a soteriology consisting of a creedal approach to knowledge, an ethics of action oriented at duties and rules of conduct, and a purely physical notion of human resurrection in the hereafter. Man ought to have the correct set of beliefs, ought to act in accordance with the dictates of Revealed Law, and should expect afterlife reward or punishment accordingly as promised.[6] Even to love God is considered an attribute of action (*ṣifat fiʿl*), viz. being obedient to Him.[7]

At a later stage, al-Rāzī abandons the physicalism of classical *kalām* and adopts a completely new theory of human nature. As we shall see in the following section, he will maintain, under *falsafī* and Sufi influence, that man has an unphysical soul and may experience intellectual pleasure as well as a spiritual afterlife alongside the physical one. Moral and theoretical perfection become real possibilities and viable human ends. The connection between the doctrine of the separate, rational soul and perfectionist ethics is underscored in al-Rāzī's minor work, *Risāla fī l-nafs*, where, he writes, commenting on the *ḥadīth*, "He who knows his self will know his Lord": "Had 'self' in this *ḥadīth* referred to the physical body, everyone would have known his Lord completely".[8] This view, which al-Rāzī attributes to most *ʿulamāʾ* and *mutakallimūn*, is then contrasted with the view of the *falāsifa* and Sufis, viz. that the soul,

[5] *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 351 ff.; *Ishāra*, fol. 63a; *Nihāya*, fol. 248a; 263b–265b.
[6] Cf. Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 172–3.
[7] *Uṣūl al-Dīn*, fol. 243; cf. *Tafsīr*, 4, 231–4; 8, 18–9.
[8] *Risāla fī l-nafs*, fol. 2a; cf. *Nafs*, 48.

> ... is neither the physical body nor physical, but is a spiritual substance that emanates on this frame, animates it, and uses it as an instrument to acquire sciences and knowledge. Once it perfects its substance by them and knows its Lord and the rights of His creatures, it will become prepared to return to His presence and to become one of His angels eternally happy.[9]

This highlights the link between the nature of the soul and the purpose of its coming into being.

Al-Rāzī frequently argues that, as with pleasure and pain, likewise perfection and imperfection are simple primary human ends that are sought or avoided in themselves. The two types of motivation are not mutually exclusive: "That pleasure is liked in itself does not conflict with perfection being liked in itself".[10] Indeed, in *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ*, he argues that both are mutually explanatory:

> We know spontaneously (*bi-l-badāha*) that we like (*aḥabba*) one thing and dislike (*kariha*) another. Therefore, we say: Either there is one thing that is liked in itself, and another that is disliked in itself, or ... each thing is liked because it involves something else, or disliked because it involves something else. The latter division is absurd, since it will lead to either infinite regress or circularity. ...
>
> Having reflected and meditated (*baḥathnā wa-ta'ammalnā*), we have found nothing that can be said to be liked in itself except pleasure and perfection. In reality, there is no difference between them; for what is pleasurable will bring about the perfection of state for the experient of pleasure (*kamāl ḥāl al-multadhdh*), and what constitutes an [aspect of] perfection will be pleasurable. However, we refer to what is physically pleasurable 'pleasure', and to what is spiritually pleasurable 'perfection'.
>
> Also, what is disliked in itself is pain and imperfection. In reality, there is no difference between them, as explained already; for perfection is liked for its own sake, in itself, *qua* perfection (*maḥbūb li-dhātih bi-dhātih min ḥaythu anna-hu kamāl*), and imperfection is disliked for its own sake, and in itself, *qua* imperfection.[11]

Thus, from the psychological and metaethical standpoints, al-Rāzī considers pleasure and perfection to be two concomitant sides of the same coin. The perfection of a given aspect of the individual is an objective feature, yet it results in the subjective experience of pleasure.[12] The latter, in turn, serves to perfect the subjective 'state'

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[9] *Risāla fī l-nafs*, fol. 2b.
[10] *Tafsīr*, 4, 232.
[11] *Nafs*, 19–20. Cf. *Maṭālib*, 3, 21–2; 3, 348–9.
[12] On the nature of pleasure and pain, see p. 156 ff. *infra*.

of the individual, which appears to refer to a sense of gratification, fulfilment or happiness.

However, he also contends that the experience of pleasure is not restricted to the perception of subjective aspects of perfection. He writes:

> Induction indicates that perfection is loved in itself. Therefore, it should be said that all that is more perfect will be more deserving of being loved (*awlā bi-l-maḥbūbiyya*). The most perfect of things is God, exalted; so He is the most deserving of being loved. The perception of what is loved, *qua* being loved, effects pleasure. And since the perception of the rational soul for the True, exalted, is more perfect than the perception of the physical faculties for their objects of perception, and since the True, exalted, is the most perfect being, the pleasure resulting from perceiving Him will be more perfect than all other pleasures.[13]

Thus, popular stories of brave heroes will invoke a great sense of admiration and love in people's hearts, without them receiving any benefit from those heroes.[14] Al-Rāzī also criticises Ibn Sīnā for implying that man may seek to know God in order to perfect himself (*istikmāl*), and responds that man may love and seek to know God in Himself, rather than for the sake of attaining greater subjective perfection, as he may become heedless of all other than God, including himself.[15] Already, in the *Iḥyā'*, al-Ghazālī distinguishes between subjective perfections, which are normally desired and sought by the agent out of self-regarding motives, and 'external' perfections that the agent appreciates for their own sake, not for the benefit that he gains from them.[16]

As regards subjective perfections, al-Rāzī argues that an entity can have aspects of perfection that pertain to its being, attributes, or acts. The perfection of an entity in its being implies, first, that the entity exists necessarily by virtue of its essence and is self-sufficient in all respects, and second, that it is completely unique in its essence. Therefore, God alone has this type of perfection.[17] Human beings may only perfect attributes of their souls, viz. knowledge and power.[18] As

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[13] *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 167–8; cf. *Tafsīr*, 4, 232.
[14] *Nafs*, 20; *Tafsīr*, 4, 232; 8, 19; cf. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 4, 300.
[15] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 108–9.
[16] Al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 4, 297–306.
[17] *Nafs*, 21–2; 131; *Tafsīr*, 4, 232.
[18] *Nafs*, 22 ff.; 131–3.

for human acts, they are said to be perfect or imperfect on account of their consequences, i.e. the resultant pleasure or pain.

Al-Rāzī's exposition of the relation between perfection and pleasure allows him to treat the consequentialist and perfectionist stances as two aspects of the same teleological ethics, though obviously they have to be reconciled at the normative level. In a late work, he contextualises these two moral stances, as follows:

> The thing's being good (*khayr*) is due to either that thing's essence or its acts. Likewise, its being evil (*sharr*) is due to either its essence or its acts. As for the goodness (*khayriyya*) that pertains to the thing's essence, it only means that it actually has every perfection and majesty (*jalāl*) that it may have. Evil is what is contrary to this. ... As for the goodness that pertains to acts and deeds (*athar*), it means pleasure and joy, and what is a means (*wasīla*) to both or either of them.[19]

He, thereby, makes a sharp distinction between his ethics of action, which is a subjectivist consequentialism, and his perfectionist ethics of character. In the latter outlook, value judgements assess aspects of an entity's essence with respect to an objective notion of the perfect essence thereof. Moral perfectionism posits an objective notion of human nature, such that something is said to be 'good' if it serves human perfection, or constitutes an aspect thereof. Before turning, in the following section, to al-Rāzī's notion of human perfection, his theory of virtue, we shall consider two theological themes where his character-oriented perfectionism contrasts markedly and fundamentally with the classical *kalām* emphasis on action.

The first concerns his Sufi-inspired interpretation of Qur'ānic allusions to the believers' love of God, which he contrasts with the dogmatism and duty-oriented Legalism of the majority of the *mutakallimūn*. The latter argue that love, being a type of will (*irāda*), can only relate to contingent things. "Therefore, if we say, 'We love God', we will mean that we love to obey God and serve Him, or that we love His reward and beneficence".[20] This will involve praising God, worshiping Him alone, having correct belief (*i'tiqād*), seeking His reward, and fearing His punishment.[21] By contrast, knowers (*'ārif*) maintain that both pleasure and perfection are sought and loved for

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[19] *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 131.
[20] *Tafsīr*, 4, 232. Cf. Joseph Bell, *Love Theory*, 47 ff.; 230, n. 13.
[21] *Tafsīr*, 4, 232; 8, 19.

their own sake. Therefore, one may love God in Himself and for His own sake (*fī dhātih wa-li-dhātih*), whereas loving His service and reward constitutes an inferior level of love.

> Pleasure being loved in itself does not conflict with perfection being loved in itself. This being the case, we say: Those who interpret love (*maḥabba*) of God, exalted, as love of obedience (*ṭāʿa*) to Him, or love of His reward, know that pleasure is loved for its own sake, but not that perfection is loved for its own sake. As for knowers, who maintain that God is loved in Himself and for His own sake, they have realised that perfection is loved for its own sake.[22]

God is the most perfect being, in His necessary existence and self-sufficiency, and in His attributes of knowledge and power. The greater the knowledge of God that one attains, the more will his yearning (*shawq*) and love of Him be.

Similarly, the classical *mutakallimūn* interpret God's 'love' for human beings in terms of His will (*irāda*) that reward (*thawāb*) be delivered to them. In the *Tafsīr*, al-Rāzī writes that they are able to support this interpretation only be arguing that since there is no evidence to affirm love as a distinct divine attribute, it ought to be denied. He replies, "In *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, we have shown that this method is weak and vacuous (*ḍaʿīfa sāqiṭa*)".[23] By 'this method', he refers to the argument *ad ignorantiam*—that if something has no proof, it should be negated—which indeed he rejects in the *Nihāya*.[24] By contrast, he asserts that "it is likely that the love of God, exalted, for the servant is an attribute other than His will that reward be delivered to him".

The second theme is the question whether angels or prophets, who are the best of mankind, are superior (*afḍal*). Most previous Sunnis (with the notable exception of al-Bāqillānī and Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥalīmī) and Shīʿīs maintain that prophets are superior, while the *falāsifa* and Muʿtazilīs hold that angels are superior.[25] In most of his writings, al-Rāzī maintains that prophets are superior, though, in the *Arbaʿīn*, he seems undecided and more inclined to the opposite view.[26]

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[22] *Tafsīr*, 4, 232.

[23] *Tafsīr*, 14, 132.

[24] *Nihāya*, fol. 6a; cf. A. Shihadeh, "From al-Ghazālī to al-Rāzī", 165.

[25] *Arbaʿīn*, 368. In *Tafsīr*, 2, 215–6, he writes that the majority of Shīʿīs contend that angels are superior.

[26] *Arbaʿīn*, 368–84; cf. *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 325; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 531 ff.; *Khamsūn*, 66–7; *ʿIṣma*, 33; also *Tafsīr*, 2, 215 ff., which is directly inspired by al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 2, 9–44; see p. 137–8 *infra*.

While much of the evidence given for both views is Qur'ānic, the most important rational argument for the superiority of prophets is as follows. Humans have more encumbrances than angels: they are afflicted with appetite, irascibility, forgetfulness and other internal motives for disobedience, as well as the corruptive influence of the devil and external causes of doubt. Therefore, "it will be harder (*ashaqq*) for humans to be obedient [to God]; and what is more difficult is superior."[27] Angels do not suffer from the same shortcomings as humans, which affect both their will and knowledge, so they perform good acts effortlessly out of their perfectly good and pure nature, and on the whole have a rather easy life. Yet, typically in action-oriented ethics, effort and hardship are the main criteria for moral superiority. The generosity of a poor man donating a small sack of wheat may be much more praiseworthy than that of a wealthy man donating a thousand pieces of gold. Al-Rāzī explains superiority (*faḍl*) here in terms of the size of the reward (*thawāb*) earned.[28]

In his latest works, he turns away from this action-oriented stance to a character-oriented perfectionism, and contends that angels are superior to prophets. He writes: "Know that the mind of one who knows what an angel *is*, and what its attributes *are*, will not allow him to delve into this question. Yet most people think that angels are birds that fly in the heavens! So they delve into this question."[29] The essence and attributes, rather than the acts, of an agent become the primary criteria for superiority, which no longer refers to the consequences of acts, but the 'excellence' of the agent, his intrinsic worth of character.[30] Responding to an argument for the superiority of prophets to angels, al-Rāzī writes that angels possess perfection in both power and knowledge: "Yet 'excellence' (*faḍīla*) has no meaning except this. Thus, since they are superior to men [in these respects], they will be more excellent than men."[31] In the *Arbaʿīn*, he records the following argument for the superiority of angels:

> Angels are free from appetite, irascibility, imagination and estimation—attributes which act as thick veils from the manifestation of the lights of God, exalted. There is no perfection except by that manifestation,

[27] *Arbaʿīn*, 369–70.
[28] *Arbaʿīn*, 370; 371; *Tafsīr*, 2, 216; 2, 232.
[29] *Maṭālib*, 7, 405 ff.; cf. *Maʿālim*, 101–2.
[30] E.g. *Maṭālib*, 7, 414; 7, 418.
[31] *Maṭālib*, 7, 410–1; cf. 7, 421 ff.

> and no imperfection except by the intervention of that veil. Since [angels] always contemplate this manifestation, while human souls are usually veiled from [it], we conclude that there is no comparison between their perfections and human perfections.
>
> To say that service (*khidma*) when many obstacles are present is more indicative of sincerity than service without obstacles is fanciful (*kalām khayālī*). For the bulk of acts of worship and obedience are intended for the realisation of that manifestation. The greater and the further from obstacles the realisation of that manifestation is, the more complete will the perfection and happiness be.[32]

The contemplative ideal replaces the earlier voluntarist trend in al-Rāzī's earlier thought, which gives primacy to the notions of volition, choice, effort, practice, responsibility and desert. Thus, adherence to theological creeds and performing acts of worship become means, rather than ends in themselves.

Human Perfection

The question of the 'reality of man' (*ḥaqīqat al-insān*) is one that al-Rāzī found to be highly problematic. He acknowledges in his late work the *Maṭālib* that it is a dilemma, about which the strangest fact is that something so close to us could be so obscure.[33]

In his earliest works, he accepts the common classical *kalām* view that the essence of man is purely physical. "In the human body", he writes in the *Ishāra*, "there are core parts (*ajzā' aṣliyya*) that will neither cease to exist nor be replaced; this is the reality of man".[34] Slightly later, in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, the reality of man is said to be nothing but the physical body (*hādhih al-bunya, hādhā al-badan*).[35]

Later, under philosophical and Sufi influence, he rejects this physicalism and advances a thorough critique thereof, in favour of a dualism of a physical body and a separate, rational and unphysical soul. He often refers to previous Sunni scholars, and sometimes to others as well, apparently to illustrate that this later doctrine is neither unorthodox nor irrational.[36] The present section will examine

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[32] *Arbaʿīn*, 382–3; cf. *Maṭālib*, 3, 302.

[33] *Maṭālib*, 1, 41–2; *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 140–1; cf. p. 190 *infra*.

[34] *Ishāra*, fol. 62b–63a; cf. *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 351 ff.; *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 338.

[35] *Nihāya*, fol. 252b.

[36] In the *Mabāḥith* (2, 224–32; 2, 345–82), he maintains that the human soul is

this later psychology briefly, only in so far as it bears on his theory of virtue; a closer study of his psychology and epistemology will be left for future studies.

Al-Rāzī goes further in rejecting *kalām* physicalism by maintaining that, essentially, man is the rational soul alone (which is my true referent when I use the expression 'I'), whereas the body is accidental to it.[37] In itself, the soul is an intellect (*ʿaql*), and is referred to as 'soul' (*nafs*) with respect to its relation to the physical body.[38] The body, on the other hand, is the locus of the non-rational aspects in man.

The ultimate purpose in the rational soul's connection to the human body is that it uses it as an instrument (*āla*) for acquiring knowledge and hence for attaining perfection.[39] It retains this perfection after death, when it departs from the physical world, where it is in a state of estrangement (*ghurba*), and returns to its primordial realm (*waṭan aṣlī*).[40] A soul that has perfected itself to a certain extent in this world may continue to increase in perfection in the afterlife.[41]

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separate (*mujarrada*) from the body, but finds Ibn Sīnā's proofs for this weak (cf. *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 1, 124; M. Marmura, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī's Critique of an Avicennan *Tanbīh*"). He attributes this theory of the soul to: *(a)* the *falāsifa*, *(b)* most Sufis, *(c)* some Sunnis, viz. al-Ghazālī (on his views on the soul, cf. Timothy Gianotti, *Al-Ghazālī's Unspeakable Doctrine of the Soul*, esp. 117 ff.), al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, and Abū ʿAbdullāh al-Ḥalīmī (d. 403/1012), *(d)* some Muʿtazila, viz. Muʿammar Ibn ʿAbbād (d. 215/830) and Abū Zayd al-Dabūsī (d. 432/1041), *(e)* some Shīʿīs, viz. al-Nawbakhtī (d. *ca.* 300/912), Muḥammad Ibn al-Nuʿmān (d. 413/1022) and the Akhbārīs, *(f)* Abū l-Hayṣam (d. 407?/1016–7) from the Karrāmiyya, *(g)* Christians and *(h)* reincarnationists (*Nihāya*, fol. 262b; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 539; *Arbaʿīn*, 267; *Asās al-Taqdīs*, 6; *Tafsīr*, 21, 45; *Iʿtiqādāt*, 63; *Maṭālib*, 7, 38; cf. Duncan Macdonald, "The Development of the Idea of Spirit in Islam"; M. Marmura, "Soul: Islamic Concepts", *Encyclopaedia of Religion*).

Later, he considers the human soul to be neither the physical body nor separate, but "a subtle, luminescent physical substance that exists in this body" (*Maʿālim*, 109; cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 266). This view was held by al-Naẓẓām (d. 231/846) (cf. al-Ashʿarī, *Maqālāt*, 2, 331) and some Ashʿarīs, including al-Juwaynī (*Irshād*, 318). Al-Rāzī attributes this view to Thābit Ibn Qurra (d. 289/901) (*Tafsīr*, 21, 45).

Finally, from the *Tafsīr* (21, 51) onwards, he reverts to his earlier view that the soul is separate. In the *Maṭālib*, he presents his most thorough discussion of the subject, refuting proofs for this doctrine by Ibn Sīnā, Miskawayh (d. 421/1030) and Abū l-Barakāt (7, 69–99), and advancing a modified version of one of Ibn Sīnā's arguments (7, 57–68) and a refutation of physicalism (7, 101–38; cf. *Risāla fī l-nafs*, fol. 2b–3b).

[37] *Nafs*, 27 ff.

[38] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 222.

[39] E.g. *Ḥikmat al-mawt*, fol. 81a; *Risāla fī l-nafs*, fol. 2b.

[40] *Ḥikmat al-mawt*, fol. 84a–86a.

[41] *Nafs*, 133.

Following Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī and 'talisman specialitsts', al-Rāzī maintains that human souls vary in their essences.[42] He contrasts this view to: *(a)* Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's view, following Plato and other ancient philosophers, that humans and animals have essentially identical souls, but differ only in their various physical natures; and *(b)* Ibn Sīnā's view, following Aristotle, that animal souls are physical, whereas humans have essentially identical and non-physical souls, but vary in their ethical properties due to variations in their bodily humours.[43] Al-Rāzī advances several 'inductive' arguments, which mainly suggest the independence of the capacity for perception and character traits from bodily conditions.[44]

But do particular human souls fall under a limited number of types, or does each soul have its own distinct essence? In his later works, al-Rāzī adopts the former view, apparently under the influence of Abū l-Barakāt and talisman specialists. He writes that the souls of the moving planets (and perhaps also fixed constellations) are the causes, or sources, (*ʿilla*; *mabdaʾ*; *aṣl*; *maʿdin*; *yanbūʿ*) for human souls (contra the *falāsifa*, for whom the producer of human souls is the Active Intellect).[45] Each planetary soul (*rūḥ kawkabī*) has a distinct essence, which determines the essences of human souls originating from it. Talisman specialists, al-Rāzī writes, refer to these heavenly souls as 'archetypes' (or 'complete natures', *ṭibāʿ tāmm*), since each possesses a set of qualities (*ṣifa; khāṣṣa*) in a perfect way, which then manifest imperfectly in the human souls it produces.[46] It will be to them like a father is to his children, providing them with assistance during their lives, and affecting their characters and acts.[47]

Since a certain planetary soul may be "magnanimous (*ḥurr*), noble, virtuous, and distinguished in its apprehension and good acts, while

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[42] Cf. Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 388–94.

[43] *Nafs*, 85; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 383; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 313b–314a; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 543; *Maṭālib*, 7, 141–2. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 222; *Shifāʾ*, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, 6, 198.

[44] *Maṭālib*, 7, 145–8.

[45] *Maṭālib*, 7, 263–7. He rejects the whole notion of the Active Intellect (*Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 2, 281–4).

[46] *Al-Sirr al-maktūm*, 111.

[47] Pseudo-Majrīṭī, a representative of 'talisman specialists', discusses 'complete natures' in *Ghāyat al-ḥakīm*, 187 ff. Cf. references to discussions of this notion in other primary and secondary sources in the German translation of this work (*"Picatrix" Das Ziel Des Weisen Von Pseudo-Mağrīṭī*, 198, n. 1). By contrast to al-Rāzī, al-Suhrawardī (d. 586/1191) (*Hayākil*, 65) considers mankind to have a single archetype (*ṭibāʿ tāmm*) (cf. al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, 482–3).

another type may be vile, evil and stupid," these same characteristics will appear in their respective human souls, both in their essences and in the effects they receive from them in their lives. This is why two strangers may meet and immediately feel either affinity or enmity toward each other, depending on the types of their souls. Al-Rāzī adds that while this model is merely a plausible hypothesis, it is verified empirically by talisman specialists.[48]

On the basis of his theory of the variation of human souls, al-Rāzī sometimes expresses a psychological determinism with respect to human character, to the extent that change in character traits appears impossible (this is to be distinguished from his standard metaphysical determinism with respect to human action). The differences among human souls are akin to those that exist among different animal species: donkeys, horses, wolves, lambs, etc.[49] Many people with malevolent traits have inherently malevolent psychological essences; though they may modify their behaviour, their essential natures will remain unchangeable:

> We see a man, who may be naturally evil and abject. If he were to undergo the maximum possible discipline, he would not depart from his malevolent nature. Rather, he may become, through discipline and admonition, such that he will avoid those acts and not perform them. Nevertheless, if he then abandons his self to its original nature, it will incline to that evil. Also, his temperament may change from warmth to coldness, from wetness to dryness, and vice versa, yet what is concomitant to his inborn nature will not change.[50]

In one place, al-Rāzī argues that since the essential traits of human souls can be neither eliminated nor modified, "one who is happy (*saʿīd*) will not become miserable (*shaqī*); and vice versa".[51] However, he seems to maintain such radical ethical determinism only in relation to the extremities in the scale of human psychological excellence: some individuals are doomed by the sheer baseness of their souls, whereas others are blessed by the excellence of theirs. Despite his insistence that altering the essence of the human soul is

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[48] *Tafsīr*, 16, 183; 19, 20; 19, 112; *Maṭālib*, 7, 142–3; 7, 266–7; 7, 272; 7, 400; 8, 136; 8, 144; *Maʿālim*, 115; *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 2, 284; *Jabr*, 35–6; *Al-Sirr al-maktūm*, 110–4. Cf. Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 388–94.

[49] *Maṭālib*, 7, 147–8.

[50] *Nafs*, 86; cf. *Jabr*, 36; *Kamāliyya* (Ar.), 90–1; (Per.), 118.

[51] *Tafsīr*, 14, 144; cf. *Maṭālib*, 1, 55–7.

impossible, al-Rāzī still considers it possible to further the perfection of those in the middle levels of the scale to the extent permitted by the particular essence of each soul.[52]

Al-Rāzī adopts Ibn Sīnā's division of human psychological faculties, which is as follows: *(a)* vegetative faculties, which serve the functions of nourishment, growth and reproduction; *(b)* animal faculties, which are either motive (including the appetitive (*shahwa*) and the irascible (*ghaḍab*)), or perceptive (the five external senses, and the inner faculties of perception); and *(c)* human, rational faculties, viz. the theoretical intellect and the practical intellect, which allows the soul to govern the body.[53] However, in contrast to Ibn Sīnā, al-Rāzī maintains that both the perceptive and active animal faculties are not bodily and physical, but are purely functions, or attributes, of the rational soul itself. On the other hand, the vegetative faculties are physical.[54]

These attributes serve both the soul directly, in its pursuit of theoretical perfection, and the wellbeing of its physical body. The soul acquires knowledge by perceiving particulars through its various attributes of perception and extracting abstract conceptions from them. Self-evident (*badīhī*) knowledge is acquired when the mind recognises connections immediately, in either affirmation or negation, among some of these conceptions as soon as they become present in it. On the basis of self-evident knowledge, the mind may then arrive at discursive (*naẓarī*) knowledge of other connections between these acquired mental conceptions. As for these attributes' serving man's physical wellbeing, this ought to be aimed at preserving the body in a state that allows it to fulfil its essential function as the instrument that the soul uses to perfect itself. The attributes of the soul serve man's physical wellbeing by allowing man to recognise what is beneficial and harmful to him, and to seek the former and avoid the latter.[55]

According to al-Rāzī, man experiences pleasure mainly when he attains greater perfection in some subjective aspect and perceives this

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[52] *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 548–9.

[53] *Nafs*, 74–7; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 235 ff. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, 6, 32 ff.; Fazlur Rahman, *Avicenna's Psychology*.

[54] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 245; *Nafs*, 77–8; 29; cf. Abū l-Barakāt, *Muʿtabar*, 2, 302. This stance has a profound impact on al-Rāzī's epistemology, to be examined in a future study.

[55] *Nafs*, 79–80.

attainment. Pleasure may occur at the perception of a change in the state of the perceiver towards a more perfect state, and pain may occur at the change towards a less perfect state. Yet neither will be experienced after the state becomes stable. Al-Rāzī speaks of three main subjective types of perfection that produce pleasure in man: *(a)* the perfection of the theoretical aspect of the soul; *(b)* perfections in the physical body, especially by the gratification of its appetites for nourishment and coition; and *(c)* perfections that man achieves in his association with other human beings, especially in the attribute of power (*qudra*), which is related to leadership and social status.

When these three types of subjective perfection are perceived by three forms of human perception, three types of pleasure may be experienced. *(a)* Intellectual pleasure is experienced when the rational soul perceives its own theoretical perfection. *(b)* Sensory pleasure is experienced when the external senses perceive the gratification of bodily needs. *(c)* The perfections that man attains in his association with other human beings are perceived by the inner, 'animal' faculties of perception, and produce a type of pleasure that al-Rāzī refers to sometimes as imaginative (*khayālī*) pleasure.[56]

When man has awareness (*shuʿūr*) of what is agreeable (*mulā'im*) and what is disagreeable (*munāfī*) to him of the last two types of perfection, his motive attributes will determine his conduct: his appetite (*shahwa*) will motivate him to seek the former, whereas irascibility (*ghaḍab*) will motivate him to avoid and repel the latter.[57] With respect to the first, intellectual attribute, man may acquire a sense of yearning (*shawq*) to progress in this respect, as we will see. Normally, engagement (*ishtighāl*) in any of these pleasures and the forms of activity to which they are connected will lead to the appearance of dispositions that prevail over (*istawlā ʿalā*) the soul and divert man from pursuing other engagements and from developing different dispositions. This is the case, al-Rāzī argues, since these faculties of perception are different attributes of the one, unitary substance of the soul.[58] The central human predicament is thus that "the greater the heart's preoccupation with other than God, the greater its deprivation from

[56] Cf. p. 155 *infra*.
[57] *Nafs*, 76; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 236; *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 533.
[58] *Maṭālib*, 7, 160; cf. *Nafs*, 28–9; *Tafsīr*, 12, 70; *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 533–4; 550–1.

witnessing the lights of God's majesty."[59]

In supporting his theory of virtue, al-Rāzī refutes commonplace (*ʿāmmī*) hedonism.[60] With regard to sensory pleasures, he maintains: *(a)* that they are 'contemptible' both in themselves and in various other concomitant respects,[61] and *(b)* that they are inferior to intellectual pleasures.[62] This general line of reasoning is apparently borrowed from Ibn Sīnā, although al-Rāzī proceeds to support it with a very different set of arguments, apparently drawing on a variety of sources, including Abū Bakr al-Rāzī.[63] For instance, he argues that sensory pleasure is not real, but is merely the alleviation of pain and thus cannot constitute a ground for human happiness.[64] He also argues that sensory pleasures conflict with humanness as such, which is purely intellectual: when man becomes preoccupied with them, his rational faculty will be obscured and he will descend into bestiality.[65]

Nonetheless, most humans are naturally and originally inclined to sensory pleasures.[66] Unlike the two other types of pleasure, these pleasures are produced by the perception of perfections strictly in the physical body, by the gratification of certain bodily needs. Yet the perfection of these physical needs is extremely transient, as they will require constant gratification. And the pleasure experienced in this perpetual cycle of physical needs and gratification thereof strengthens the soul's attachment to sensory pleasures.[67] Therefore, it is more appropriate to speak of them, in the moral context, as sensory pleasures, rather than aspects of perfection. By contrast, al-Rāzī normally discusses the two other types of pleasure primarily qua perfections.

He argues that the main subjective attributes that constitute

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[59] *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 550.

[60] *Nafs*, 88; *Mabāḥith*, 2, 426–7; *Maṭālib*, 7, 297; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 4, 7.

[61] *Nafs*, 96–107.

[62] *Nafs*, 88–95; *Maṭālib*, 7, 297–302; *Tanbīh*, 45–9.

[63] Compare *Mabāḥith*, 2, 441–2, and Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 4, 7–10. On Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's refutation of hedonism, see his *Al-Ṭibb al-rūḥānī*, 39 ff.; *Al-Sīra al-falsafiyya* (in the *Rasāʾil*), 101–2; *Shukūk ʿalā Jālīnūs*, 17; cf. Majid Fakhry, *Ethical Theories*, 72–3.

[64] This is discussed at length, p. 156 ff. *infra*.

[65] *Nafs*, 98–9.

[66] *Nafs*, 105; *Tanbīh*, 44–5; *Tafsīr*, 18, 220.

[67] *Nafs* (MS), fol. 279b. The passage is missing from the poor printed edition (p. 106).

perfections in the rational soul and that humans seek to perfect in themselves are two, viz. knowledge and power.[68] The latter attribute concerns the soul's involvement in the external physical world and manifests in various ways, such as the individual's power over inanimate objects and other human beings—the "possession of wealth" and "of hearts", respectively.[69] One furthers his power over other human beings primarily by attaining status (*jāh*) and leadership, which leads one into competition with others. Al-Rāzī argues that, initially, the individual may have little desire for these pleasures, but may easily become disposed to seeking them through habituation, as he begins to experience them. Once the desire and disposition are acquired, the degrees to which the individual's power over external beings may be furthered will be endless.[70]

Though al-Rāzī accepts that power is a real perfection in the soul and leads to the experience of pleasure, he nonetheless censures it for various reasons; e.g. it is worldly and ceases with the soul's departure from the body, leading to severe pain in the soul, and it fails to bring about true happiness. By contrast, the attribute of knowledge survives the death of the body and leads to the soul's experience of happiness posthumously. Moreover, as with the pursuit of sensory pleasures, which revolve around the individual's physical body, involvement in the external physical world also constitutes an engagement of the soul that distracts it from furthering its attribute of knowledge.[71]

The human good (*khayr*), therefore, is identified with perfecting the spiritual attribute of knowledge, to the exclusion of the soul's engagement in the physical body and the external world. The soul can be directed either to the higher, divine realm, as in the case of those who are spiritually advanced and truly happy, or to the lower, physical world, which is the case of those who are completely engrossed in worldly pleasures. In the middle, some souls constantly alternate attention between the upper world, which they approach through piety and worship, and the lower world, in which they manage various worldly affairs.[72] Al-Rāzī adds that the science that guides to the

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[68] *Nafs*, 22; 131; *Maṭālib*, 1, 260; *Tafsīr*, 12, 173; 17, 216. Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyā'*, 4, 300–7.

[69] *Nafs*, 22–3; 128–30.

[70] *Nafs*, 24–5.

[71] E.g. *Nafs*, 144.

[72] *Nafs*, 25–6.

higher level is the science of spiritual discipline (*al-riyāḍa al-rūḥāniyya*), by which he means advanced Sufism.[73] That which guides to the middle level is the science of character (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*), which is a more elementary discipline that describes the way in which the average person may acquire or evade various character traits (*khuluq*).

The science of character concerns the pursuit of moral virtue, i.e. virtue with respect to the non-rational aspects of the human soul. It allows one to purge his soul from 'what should not be' (*mā lā yanbaghī*), by detaching it from its inherent physical engagements.[74] Al-Rāzī presents a practical ethics of virtue in the second part of *Kitāb al-Nafs*, which he also refers to as a book on *akhlāq*. Three main vices are discussed, viz. the love of wealth, the love of status, and hypocrisy (*riyāʾ*), for each of which he prescribes both contemplative (*ʿilmī*) and practical (*ʿamalī*) therapy (*ʿilāj*).[75] Contemplative therapies consist of mental meditations and exercises that produce a conviction within one that one ought to avoid these vices, which produces a sense of repulsion and detachment from them. Practical therapies consist of recommendations to adhere to certain forms of conduct, which loosen the individual's attachment to the activities connected to these vices and promote contrary dispositions in the self. While these three vices are related to engagements in the external world, al-Rāzī seems to consider his preceding discussion on censuring sensory pleasures to provide sufficient reasons for turning away from them: perhaps these may be viewed as contemplative therapies for the soul's engagement in the physical body.

In his theory of virtue, al-Rāzī places greater emphasis on ridding the soul of vices, which it acquires by its engagement in the physical world, than on engendering positive moral virtues, other than those that should replace these vices. This feature stems from his definition of happiness (*saʿāda*) purely in terms of intellectual pleasure, which transpires from theoretical perfection. In this, he follows Ibn Sīnā, who maintains that the purpose of the soul's attachment to matter, and of its having a practical intellect, is the perfection of its theoretical aspect, which alone leads to happiness.[76] For Ibn Sīnā,

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[73] On spiritual discipline, see *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 110 ff.
[74] *Maṭālib*, 8, 111.
[75] See *Nafs*, 114; 121; 141; 147; 164.
[76] Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, 6, 37–41; cf. 6, 184–6.

practical (including moral) development may only reduce the misery (*shaqāwa*) that the soul experiences in its attachment to the physical world, and constitutes only a precondition, rather than a cause, for happiness.[77] Therefore, in contrast to Aristotle and al-Fārābī, he considers 'dispositions of intermediacy' (*tawassuṭ*) to be good only on account of their efficacy in purifying the rational soul from its physical attachments.[78] For neither acts nor character traits, according to Ibn Sīnā, can be good or virtuous intrinsically.

This is a stance that al-Rāzī adopts. He presents his definitive discussion of happiness and intellectual pleasure in the *Mulakhkhaṣ*,[79] where he writes with respect to practical perfection, in the section on eschatology:

> Virtuous character traits do not produce happiness; for their objective is that the soul does not become firmly attached to the body. Their effect is only that the soul does not become tormented (*muʿadhdhab*); as for [the attainment of] happiness, [they do not have any effect].[80]

While bad character leads to torment, virtuous character is only a condition for happiness, which is attained through theoretical perfection. The happiness of someone who is advanced theoretically will be impaired by bad (*radī'*) character traits.[81]

Al-Rāzī presents a hierarchy of human souls according to their theoretical perfection, the happiest being souls that have reached demonstrative knowledge, followed by uncritical imitators (*muqallid*), who possess correct beliefs and will be in a state of wellbeing (*salāma*) from torment.[82] Only demonstrative knowledge attainable through metaphysical enquiry, which provides immutable knowledge of eternal truths, contributes towards the soul's theoretical perfection, to the exclusion of other fields of enquiry, which provide mutable knowledge, such as the disciplines of language, Qur'ānic exegesis,

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77 Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ṭabīʿiyyāt*, 6, 186; *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 427–9.
78 Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 430.
79 This definitiveness is also evident from his references in later works: *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 92; *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 167.
80 *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 327b–328a.
81 Cf. *Mabāḥith*, 2, 426 ff.; Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 4, 7 ff.; *Najāt*, 326 ff.
82 *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 327b–328a. After the soul's separation from the body, demonstrative knowledge will become immediate (*ḍarūrī*) and will be perfected even further (*Maṭālib*, 7, 275).

jurisprudence and traditions (*akhbār*).[83] For this, "in order to acquire discursive (*naẓarī*) knowledge, one needs learning (*ta'allum*), assistance from others, and reliance on the craft of [discursive] procedures (*al-qānūn al-ṣinā'ī*)", i.e. logic.[84]

Yet, in most of his works, al-Rāzī describes a level higher than the demonstrative level, viz. that of those rare intellects that have a special ability to attain knowledge with little effort and discursive reflection. These intellects are unique both quantitatively and qualitatively: they are able to combine conceptions to apprehend more primary premises than normal, and they are then able to combine these premises to arrive at obscure conclusions effortlessly.[85] Thus, those individuals, who include prophets and *awliyā'*, will require neither learning nor the instrument of logic to attain theoretical perfection. Al-Rāzī here appears influenced partly by Ibn Sīnā's notion of intuition (*ḥads*). He writes that though all human souls are naturally capable of attaining discursive knowledge quickly and intuitively without any pursuit, they are hindered by their engagement in governing their bodies and by imagination. Because of these hindrances, they will depend on thought (*fikr*) to arrive at discursive knowledge.[86]

Returning to al-Rāzī's identification of happiness with the experience of intellectual pleasure, which he adopts from Ibn Sīnā, we find that he nonetheless rejects his proofs for the possibility of this form of pleasure and its superiority to other pleasures.[87] In the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, he goes on to explain his own approach to this question:

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[83] *Nafs*, 133. In the following chapter, we will see that at a later stage in his career, al-Rāzī will change this assessment with respect to Qur'ānic exegesis. He is, after all, the author of one of the largest and most outstanding Qur'ānic commentaries of all time.

[84] *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 530.

[85] *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 529–30; cf. *Maṭālib*, 7, 280; *Ma'ālim*, 113–4.

[86] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 1, 157. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 1, 390–5; Dimitri Gutas, *Avicenna and the Aristotelian Tradition*, 159 ff.; "Intuition and Thinking".

[87] E.g. Ibn Sīnā argues that since pleasure is the perception of the agreeable, the more 'intense' the perception and the 'nobler' the object of perception, the more perfect will be the pleasure. Intellectual perception delves deeper into the essences of things than do other forms of perception. God, His attributes, the angels and the cosmos as a whole are nobler than other objects of perception. Therefore, the intellectual pleasure that results from perceiving them is superior to other pleasures. However, al-Rāzī rejects defining pleasure as the perception of the agreeable (see p. 159–60 *infra*), and points out that since the nature and objects of intellectual perception are different from those of sensory perception, there is no evidence that it should produce pleasure in the perceiver (*Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 323b–326a; cf. *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, 3, 135 ff.; Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 4, 11–25). Ibn Sīnā also argues that though angels do

> We do not deny intellectual pleasure, nor that it is more intense than other [pleasures]. But this is not provable by logical proofs. Nonetheless, not all that cannot be proved in this way should be rejected. ... The only way to accept it with certainty is to experience it. The more one is detached from physical attachments, and the more attracted he is to theological knowledge, the greater will his share of it be. God has bestowed it upon me numerous times, in both sleep and wakefulness, after my belief in it strengthened and my soul became more attuned to it.
>
> However, it seems that the *falāsifa* provided the aforementioned proofs only as directives and attractives. I add to this and say:
>
> Perfection is sought for its own sake—[this is known] by induction. For in every engagement, be it noble or base, one will love (*ḥubb*) what is perfect in it more than what is imperfect. As the levels of perfection are many, the levels of love too are many. And as the highest perfection is that of God, exalted, intense love will be for Him alone. Intense love will then result in two consecutive states: heedlessness (*ghafla*) of all but the beloved, and finding pleasure in perceiving the beloved. Induction indicates this. Loving God, exalted, intensely will undoubtedly produce these two states. The people of [spiritual] experience (*aṣḥāb al-dhawq*) call heedlessness of all but Him 'annihilation' (*fanā'*). ... Intense love will thus be reserved for God alone. The heart does not find tranquillity except in His remembrance (*dhikr*). ...
>
> What the dilettanti think, that knowledge of any intellectual matter can be a cause for intellectual pleasure, is false. Rather, pleasure only results from knowing God, exalted, and from being immersed in loving Him. Therefore, since human intellects attain knowledge of God only by knowing His acts, the greater the knowledge of them, and the more complete the perception of His design, the more complete will loving Him and finding pleasure in loving Him be.[88]

This Sufi-inspired notion of theoretical perfection contrasts with Ibn Sīnā's stance, which al-Rāzī outlines in the earlier *Mabāḥith*:

> Concerning the extent of knowledge at which this happiness is attained, the Shaykh says: "I cannot explicate this matter".[89] However, in the *Mubāḥathāt*, he is content with the intellection of separate substances (*mufāriqāt*).[90] In the *Shifā'* and the *Najāt*, he considers it to be that the

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not eat or copulate, their state is superior to that of beasts. Al-Rāzī retorts that this is a highly rhetorical argument and rests on the assumption that angels experience pleasure (*Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 325b–6a; *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 87; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 4, 10. Al-Rāzī accepts Ibn Sīnā's arguments earlier in *Mabāḥith*, 2, 426–7).

88 *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 326a–b (also quoted by al-Bursawī, *Tahāfut*, 124–5); cf. *Ma'ālim*, 113–4.

89 Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 429.

90 Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Mubāḥathāt*, 197–8; 210.

> human soul acquires true conceptions of all separate primary principles, asserts them apodictically and demonstratively, knows the final causes for universal motions to the exclusion of particular ones, fathoms the form of the entirety [of being], the relations among its various parts, and the order that initiates from the First Principle to the lowermost existents in its hierarchy, understands providence and its manner, and recognises how the entity that is superior to all is distinct in its existence and oneness, how it knows, without any multiplicity or change whatsoever being attributed to it, and how existents are related to it.[91]

Attaining these cognitions will require the mastery of both metaphysics and physics, which implies that only a philosopher can attain theoretical perfection. By contrast, al-Rāzī maintains that happiness may be attained only by knowing God, whereas other intellectual pursuits may distract from this end. One ought to,

> ... view His creatures qua their requiring a producer who possesses the attributes of perfection, since knowing them in any other respect will oppose [the attainment of] this happiness. I have learnt this from experience (*tajriba*).[92]

Human souls may acquire a sense of yearning (*shawq*) towards knowing God by becoming aware of His being and by contemplating signs of design in His creatures. When the love (*ʿishq; maḥabba*) of God becomes established in the heart, the heart will be repulsed by all else. Yearning, al-Rāzī explains, transpires when man gains some awareness of God, but perceives Him neither constantly nor completely; he will then desire to attain purer and more complete and constant knowledge of Him. In this world, man's knowledge of God will inevitably be obscured to some extent by the distorting veil of the imagination, which will be lifted in the afterlife. Yet man will not attain complete knowledge of God in either world, since the degrees of knowing God are endless. The journey is thus endless, and the degrees of human perfection are infinite—no human being has ever reached complete knowledge of God. If one attains complete knowledge of an object of knowledge, his yearning for it

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[91] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 429; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 429; 2, 425–6; *Najāt*, 331. On Ibn Sīnā's views on this question, see Yahya Michot, *La destinée de l'homme*, 46–7, n. 78.

[92] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 327a; cf. *Tafsīr*, 4, 233. Cf. al-Ghazālī, *Iḥyāʾ*, 4, 308–10.

will cease; yet, al-Rāzī points out, attaining greater knowledge of God will only increase the yearning.[93]

Prophecy

One may wonder, however, how al-Rāzī conceives the relation between this perfectionist stance and revealed religion. Defining goodness in terms of spiritual perfection does not seem to square easily with defining it in terms of adherence to Revealed Law, with reference to the afterlife reward it may lead to. This problem is addressed most directly in discussions of the nature of prophecy.[94]

Al-Rāzī's Traditional Approach to Prophecy

From his earliest writings, al-Rāzī follows the traditional Ashʿarī approach to proving prophecy, which relies on miracles: whoever claims to be a prophet and performs miracles, under certain conditions, is a true prophet. God ordains prophets and supports them with miracles that prove their ordinance.[95] There are then lengthy discussions of what qualifies as a true miracle and of the conditions that should be met in the character of the claimant of prophethood, and in the contents and circumstances of the claim that he makes.[96]

The divine origin of revelation and the truthfulness of a given claimant of prophethood are recognised from his performance of miracles, evidence that is not essential to prophecy as such, but 'external' to it. A particular claim of prophethood may then be scrutinised 'internally', not in order to prove its truthfulness, but

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[93] *Tafsīr*, 4, 233–4; *Nafs*, 5–9; *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 100.

[94] Only relevant aspects of his prophetology will be examined. On the infallibility of prophets, see his *ʿIṣmat al-anbiyāʾ* (cf. Ceylan, *Theology and Tafsir*, 172–5). On prophetic miracles, especially the Qurʾān, see *Nihāyat al-ījāz fī dirāyat al-iʿjāz*.

[95] In Ashʿarī theology, prophecy is established by divine ordinance, rather than any characteristics of the prophet himself. People recognise a person's prophethood only through miracles. In one place in the *Tafsīr* (18, 110), al-Rāzī writes that "prophecy is not acquired (*muktasaba*)". Elsewhere in the *Tafsīr* (19, 96), he states that the matter is more complex than prophecy being either a 'gift' (*hiba*; *minna*) from God, as the exoterics (*ẓāhiriyyūn*) of the Sunnis maintain, or its following from properties of the prophet himself, "as some Muslim *falāsifa* maintain".

[96] E.g. *Ishāra*, fol. 46b–51b; *Nihāya*, fol. 207b–233a; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 492 ff. (where he refers to the discussion in the *Nihāya*); *Arbaʿīn*, 302–29; *Khamsūn*, 64.

to ascertain whether some of the claims it makes are plainly false, should they contradict the certainties of unaided reason (e.g. that the world is temporal, and that God is one).

In many works, al-Rāzī will then devote long sections to proving prophecy from miracles and to refuting objections advanced by *falāsifa*, atheists, followers of other religions, and sceptics of various sorts. Even in the *Maṭālib*, a very late work, he defends this proof against a long list of objections, basing it on both the premise that God is a free agent who creates all existents directly and his rejection of moral realism.[97] The former addresses the objection that miracles are unusual, yet perfectly natural, events, which are caused, e.g., by the person's psychological qualities, higher causes, or lower spirits. The latter principle relates to various objections, e.g. that obligating humans (*taklīf*) is morally reprehensible, and that revelation is superfluous, since morality is knowable by autonomous reason.

This traditional Ashʿarī proof competed with an influential *falsafī* theory of prophecy that Ibn Sīnā developed and articulated. According to this theory, a prophet will have certain psychological faculties that are actualised in a more superior way than those of the average person. He will have a perfect and intense imaginative faculty, which will receive intelligible forms from the higher heavenly souls and present them in the form of imagery, as well as a perfect intellectual faculty, which, by its contact with the Active Intellect, will be able to arrive intuitively at conclusions from premises without the mediation of syllogisms.[98] Revelation (*waḥy*) is the emanation from these higher causes to the prophet's psychological faculties, and the 'message' (*risāla*) is the result of this contact.[99] The angelic image seen by the prophet also results from this contact and is formed by his imaginative faculty.[100]

However, this psychological model only shows that prophecy is possible. Ibn Sīnā then argues that the appearance of prophets is necessary for the spiritual advancement of common people, and (following Ikhwān al-Ṣafā and al-Fārābī) that prophecy is also a socio-political necessity. Only prophets are capable of introducing laws

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[97] *Maṭālib*, 8, 7–100.

[98] Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Aḥwāl*, 114–26; *Ithbāt al-nubuwwāt*, 41–7.

[99] Ibn Sīnā, *Ithbāt al-nubuwwāt*, 47.

[100] On Ibn Sīnā's theory of prophecy, see: Y. Michot, *La destinée de l'homme*, 118 ff.; H. Davidson, *Alfarabi, Avicenna, and Averroes on Intellect*, 116 ff.

that organise human life and association, and are thus necessary for human wellbeing (*ṣalāḥ*). Therefore, he concludes, divine providence (*ʿināya*) will necessarily provide prophets for mankind.[101]

Despite his early Ashʿarism, al-Rāzī seems to accept this theory of prophecy in the *Mabāḥith*, one of his earliest *falsafī* works, where he often follows Ibn Sīnā closely. His discussion of prophecy here is generally paraphrased from Ibn Sīnā's works, including the notions of the appearance of the prophet being a socio-political necessity, the special psychological nature of the prophet, and the process of revelation.[102]

However, in the later *Mulakhkhaṣ* and *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, al-Rāzī totally rejects Ibn Sīnā's theory of prophecy. Against his psychological explanation of 'supernatural' events (including miracles, the visual perception of angels and the reception of revelations), al-Rāzī argues, for instance, that such events could have other natural explanations.[103] Also, against Ibn Sīnā's teleological explanation to prophecy, he presents the following argument in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*:

> What is the meaning of your saying, "Since people in this world need a lawgiver, his existence will be necessary (*wājib*)"? ... If you mean that it is obligatory on God to create and existentiate him (as the Muʿtazila say, "Compensation is 'obligatory' upon God", i.e. that if He does not deliver it, He will deserve blame), then that will go against what the *falāsifa* claim in the first place.
>
> However, if you mean that since the existence of the prophet brings about the order of this world, and since it has been proved that God is the source of every perfection and good, it will be necessary that God causes that person to come into being, then this too is false. For we say: Not all that is most advantageous (*aṣlaḥ*) to this world will happen necessarily in this world. For had the people of this world been naturally disposed to goodness and virtues, that would have been more advantageous than their present condition; yet that is not the case. Therefore, it is conceivable for the existence of the prophet to

[101] Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 441–6; *Najāt*, 338–40; *Ishārāt*, 3, 226–7.

[102] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 523–4; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 441–2. On prophetic psychology, see *Mabāḥith*, 2, 417–24; cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Karāmāt*, 225–40.

[103] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 320b–323a; *Maṭālib*, 8, 136–7. The producer of miracles could be angels, jinn, or heavenly bodies. Or, according to al-Rāzī's view that the essences of human souls differ, the prophet could have a unique psychological property that would enable him to perform miracles. (On classical Ashʿarī objections to *falsafī* conceptions of prophecy, see M. Marmura, "Avicenna's Theory of Prophecy in the Light of Ashʿarite Theology", esp. 160–4).

> be more advantageous than his non-existence, yet for [no prophet] to ever exist!
>
> If he meant something else, then that ought to be explained, so that we may investigate its plausibility or falsehood.[104]

The argument underlines an epistemological weakness in Ibn Sīnā's teleological proof of prophecy. Assuming that this world is indeed the best of all possible worlds, there is no way of ascertaining whether a certain human advantage, no matter how urgently needed, is necessary or not. Indeed, we can conceive of other possible worlds that would be more or less advantageous to humans than this world (e.g. a world with more or fewer human illnesses); yet we will be unable to judge any as necessary. A world in which perfect lawgivers, each with a perfect psyche that would enable him to receive knowledge from above and communicate it to humans in a way that would serve their interests, is, according to al-Rāzī, perfectly conceivable, as indeed are other possible worlds in which human wellbeing is catered for in a more perfect manner than in this world.

In the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, al-Rāzī presents occasionalism and voluntarism as the correct alternatives to psychological and teleological approaches to explaining and proving prophecy. He argues that the only way to proving prophecy is by affirming God's unconstrained will and His absolute omnipotence, and using the proof from miracles alone.[105] In this *falsafī* work, we are thus referred to *kalām*.

On the Proof of Prophecy in the Muḥaṣṣal

At a strictly theological level, al-Rāzī and all classical Ashʿarīs maintain that not all of God's commands and acts that affect humans are aimed at human advantage. However, is it possible that at least some of His acts are aimed at human advantage? In some of his earlier works, al-Rāzī answers in the affirmative: it is conceivable that some divine acts are performed for the sake of human advantage. However, unaided reason has no means to arriving at more detailed knowledge beyond affirming this possibility. He writes that "it is conceivable that [God] sends prophets for the sake of a benefit that we do not know".[106]

Yet, as we saw in the previous chapter, al-Rāzī maintains that

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[104] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 106.
[105] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 323a.
[106] *Ishāra*, fol. 46b; cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 328–9.

although it is inconceivable to affirm motives (hence purposes) for God's acts and commands, it is often possible to study the contents of revealed texts and to recognise, inductively, aspects thereof that serve certain human advantages. Such induction is required in jurisprudence, especially in the method of *qiyās*.

In the *Muḥaṣṣal*, al-Rāzī takes this same approach in responding to the Barāhima, who argue that prophecy is pointless; for our minds are able to know the good, the bad, the beneficial and the harmful, without the aid of revelation.[107] If prophecy agrees with this knowledge, it will be superfluous; if not, it will be wrong.[108] Though he would normally reply to such arguments by rejecting ethical rationalism and asserting that God's acts and commands cannot be judged ethically, here he chooses to cite examples of how humans in fact receive two main types of great benefit from revelation. First, it confirms knowledge that unaided reason may attain. For instance, while the mind may know that the world requires a wise maker, prophets will bear further witness to this and make belief in it obligatory: this is a great benefit for humans.[109] Second, revelation provides knowledge that unaided reason cannot attain. Al-Rāzī cites several examples that people have given for this type of knowledge: e.g. *(a)* knowledge of some divine attributes, such as hearing, sight and speech, *(b)* the organisation of society and the reduction of disorder through legal systems, and *(c)* knowledge of poisonous plants (which would otherwise require dangerous experimentation).[110] Some examples (such as the last) are ones that al-Rāzī himself does not accept. The thrust of this general argument is that indeed there do appear to be many benefits from revelation. Nonetheless, he does not suggest that any of these are necessary aspects of prophecy, or can be relied upon in proving prophecy.

In this same work, he also cites the following proof of prophecy, alongside the proof from miracles:

> The second way to proving the prophecy of [Muḥammad], peace be upon him, is the inference (*istidlāl*) from his character traits, acts, judgements and conduct. Although each of these alone does not indicate

[107] On them, cf. article "Barāhima", *EI*²; Norman Calder, "The Barāhima: Literary Construct and Historical Reality".

[108] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 503–4; cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 327–9.

[109] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 512–4.

[110] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 514–9.

> prophecy, their combination is known, with certainty, to be found only in prophets. This was the preferred way of al-Jāḥiẓ and was adopted by al-Ghazālī in his book the *Munqidh*.[111]

Al-Rāzī, in the *Muḥaṣṣal*, does not endorse this proof from the characteristics of the claimant of prophethood, and the listed benefits of prophecy are not given in support of it. Instead, he writes:

> What should be relied upon (*al-muʿtamad*) in [proving] the messengership of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, is his presentation of [the miracle of] the Qurʾān. All other approaches may be cited as complimentary evidence.[112]

Al-Rāzī here prefers the proof from miracles, but shows some interest in teleological approaches to prophecy.[113]

The Teleological Approach to Prophecy

In works later than the *Muḥaṣṣal*, probably from the *Tafsīr* onwards, al-Rāzī adopts a proof of prophecy akin to that attributed to al-Jāḥiẓ and al-Ghazālī, which he will now consider to be superior to the proof from miracles. In the *Maʿālim*, he introduces it as follows:

> In the first method [to proving prophecy], we prove [the claimant's] prophethood through miracles. Once his prophethood is affirmed, we infer the truth of his sayings and deeds from this affirmation. As for this [second] method, we show that all that he presents in speech and action are the deeds of prophets; therefore, he will necessarily be a truthful and true prophet, who is sent by God.[114]

And in the *Maṭālib*:

> The second [method] is to say: We know initially which doctrines are true and which acts are correct (*ṣawāb*). Knowing these, if we see a person calling people to true religion, and if we see his speech having a powerful effect in diverting people from falsehood to truth, we will realise that he is a truthful prophet, whom it is obligatory to follow. This method is more rational, and fewer doubts surround it.[115]

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[111] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 491; cf. *Tafsīr*, 32, 41.
[112] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 508.
[113] Frank Griffel ("Al-Ġazālī's Concept of Prophecy", 106) notes that this proof is rejected in the *Muḥaṣṣal*. However, the objection that al-Rāzī cites is not his own (*Muḥaṣṣal*, 500–1).
[114] *Maʿālim*, 93. Cf. *Tafsīr*, 17, 114–7; 19, 98; *Maʿālim*, 93–5; *Maṭālib*, 8, 103–25; *Tanbīh*, 34 ff.
[115] *Maṭālib*, 8, 103.

Al-Rāzī refers to this method as "the proof of prophecy from the prophet's ability to perfect those who are imperfect (*takmīl al-nāqiṣīn*)". Human perfection, at which happiness is attained, is realised in the perfecting of the individual's theoretical and practical faculties. The perfection of the practical faculty involves the acquisition of a disposition (*malaka*) to perform good acts, which draw one away from sensory pleasures towards the hereafter and a spiritual mode of being.

Al-Rāzī posits a hierarchy of human souls: *(a)* the majority of people are imperfect (*nāqiṣ*); *(b)* the *awliyā'* have both theoretical and practical perfection, but are incapable of perfecting others; and *(c)* prophets are perfect in both respects, and are capable of perfecting those who are imperfect. There are also infinite degrees of perfection and imperfection, varying in weakness and intensity;[116] the *awliyā'* vary in their degrees of perfection, and prophets vary in their capacities to perfect others.

The distinction between prophets and *awliyā'* in both qualities is a matter of degree: though a *walī* may perfect some people, only a prophet will be able to perfect multitudes of people.[117] Hence, prophets are more perfect than *awliyā'*; the *walī* is perfect and complete, yet the prophet will have absolute perfection (*kamāl muṭlaq*), and will be "complete and above completeness (*tāmm wa-fawq al-tamām*)".[118] However, it appears that there are cases where prophets and *awliyā'* from different times are equal in their ability to perfect others.[119]

Al-Rāzī's proof at once attempts to prove both the necessity of prophecy as such and the truth of a particular claim of prophethood. He argues that this second proof of prophecy is superior to the proof from miracles, since it is a demonstration turning on the question 'why?' (*burhān al-li-ma*). It relies on understanding the essence of what is being proved, and showing that it is true by virtue of that essence itself. He writes that when we know the essence of prophethood to

[116] *Maṭālib*, 8, 104.

[117] *Ma'ālim*, 101.

[118] *Tanbīh*, 38. Ibn Sīnā (*Shifā', Ilāhiyyāt*, 1, 186 ff.; cf. 2, 355) defines '*tāmm wa-fawq al-tamām*' as the thing being perfect in a certain respect and providing benefit of the same respect to other beings.

[119] This, al-Rāzī writes, is the meaning of the *ḥadīth*, "The scholars of my community are the likes of the prophets of the Israelites" (*Tafsīr*, 17, 115; cf. 19, 98). However, he makes it clear that a non-prophet never reaches the level of any prophet, and he criticises those who place 'Alī above some previous prophets (*Tafsīr*, 8, 86; cf. *Lawāmi'*, 320–1).

be the perfection of imperfect people by a perfect person, we will be able to judge whether a particular person is a prophet in essence or not. By contrast, the proof of prophethood through miracles is a demonstration of the fact (*burhān al-inna*), since it involves our knowing the cause from one of its effects, without necessarily knowing its essence. We may know that the prophet is given a high status by God; yet we will not comprehend the nature of that status.[120]

In its most general and basic framework, this theory of prophecy draws on a number of influences. In the *Muḥaṣṣal*, al-Rāzī specifies al-Jāḥiẓ (d. 255/869) and al-Ghazālī as two previous exponents of this proof of prophecy. Al-Jāḥiẓ indeed appears to be one of the first to advance such an approach to prophethood, albeit in rudimentary form. In his *Ḥujaj al-nubuwwa*, he proclaims to defend prophecy against objections and to fill gaps that are due, not to lack of evidence, but to the absence of a systematic analysis of evidence.[121] As well as using the argument from miracles, al-Jāḥiẓ argues that since men are created imperfect (*nāqiṣ*) and heedless of their own interests, it will be necessary that prophets be sent to guide them, so that people do not have any excuse (*ḥujja*) against God on the day of judgement.[122] The highly Muʿtazilī character of this approach is apparent, since it effectively places God under a moral imperative to act in the interest of humans. Al-Jāḥiẓ then writes that a prophet fit to guide and perfect others will have to be someone with both high moral traits and excellence in conduct.[123]

In contrast to al-Jāḥiẓ, whose main concern lies in moral and practical aspects of human life, al-Ghazālī, in the *Munqidh*, emphasises the role of the prophet with respect to human spiritual and theoretical perfection. The proof of prophethood, for him, lies in evidence of the prophet's success in perfecting multitudes of people who are in a state of natural ignorance.[124] This proof, he writes, is superior to

[120] *Tafsīr*, 17, 115; *Maʿālim*, 94–5; *Maṭālib*, 8, 123. On these two types of demonstration, see al-Fārābī, *Burhān*, 26; Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 103–4.

[121] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥujaj*, 128–34.

[122] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥujaj*, 136–7. A Qur'ānic reference is implied (Qur. 4:165).

[123] Al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ḥujaj*, 156–7.

[124] Al-Ghazālī writes: "If you understand what it is to be a prophet, and have devoted much time to the study of the Qur'ān and the traditions, you will arrive at an immediate knowledge of the fact that [Muḥammad], peace be upon him, is in the highest grades of prophethood. Convince yourself of that by trying out

the proof from miracles.[125] Interestingly, al-Rāzī also indicates that he adopts the distinction between the prophet and the *walī* from an unspecified work by al-Ghazālī. According to this model, al-Rāzī writes, the *walī* is the perfect man (*al-insān al-kāmil*) who is incapable of perfecting others, while the prophet is the perfect man who at the same time perfects others (*al-insān al-kāmil al-mukammil*). At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who are 'astray' (*ḍāll*), or 'astray and lead others astray' (*ḍāll muḍill*).[126]

Notwithstanding the influence of these two earlier theologians, later commentators note that al-Rāzī adopts his later theory of prophecy from the *falāsifa*.[127] As we saw, Ibn Sīnā indeed conceives the prophet as a person of high spiritual nature, whose existence is necessary for the realisation of both the perfection of society and the spiritual perfection of the individual. Yet the spiritual role of prophecy is relatively minor for Ibn Sīnā, who (as we will see below) maintains that the prophet's immediate purpose is the practical, rather than the theoretical, perfection of humanity.

Al-Rāzī's later theory of prophecy also has much in common with al-Shahrastānī's discussion of prophecy in *al-Milal wa-l-niḥal*, in which he showed particular interest.[128] Al-Shahrastānī writes that prophecy

what he said about the influence of devotional practices on the purification of the heart. ... When you have made trial of these in a thousand or several thousand instances, you will arrive at an immediate knowledge beyond all doubt" (*Munqidh*, 149; cf. 144–50; W. Montgomery Watt's translation, with modification, *Faith and Practice*, 67).

[125] Al-Ghazālī, *Munqidh*, 149–50.

[126] *Tafsīr*, 19, 98. I have not found this distinction in any of al-Ghazālī's works. The closest seems to be *al-Risāla al-Laduniyya* (cf. 69 ff.), which al-Rāzī refers to expressly in a different context (*Tafsīr*, 21, 149).

[127] E.g. al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 8, 261 (referring to the *Maṭālib*); Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmūʿ*, 4, 99; Khwansārī, *Rawḍāt*, 701 (quoting an earlier author, in reference to the *Maʿālim*).

[128] See p. 114 *supra*. Al-Shahrastānī (*Milal*, 2, 9–44; cf. *Muṣāraʿa*, 130–2) designates this notion of prophecy as that of the 'Ḥunafā'', prophetic monotheists, who call to the return to human primordial nature (*fiṭra*), and are represented in his time by (at least some) Muslims. (Elsewhere, he refers to Islamic sects that have departed from *al-Milla al-Ḥanīfiyya*, 1, 36). They defend prophetology as an alternative to the Sabian deification of spiritual entities (*rūḥāniyyāt*). These are the two main creeds that existed at the time of Abraham (1, 230). The discussion is represented as a summary of debates that occurred between the two groups, yet it is clear that the author is on the side of the 'Ḥunafā'' (cf. e.g. Hermes Trismegistos is not Sabian, "God forbid!", 2, 44; Abraham refutes Sabianism, 2, 53; cf. *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 426–9; 464–5), and that, regardless of whether he considers the debates real or not, the

involves two perfections: that the prophet is perfect in himself, and that he is a perfecter (*mukammil*) of others. The prophet has both theoretical and practical perfection, as well as the ability to perfect others in both respects.[129] The prophetology presented by al-Shahrastānī here manifests clear, albeit mild, Ismāʿīlī undertones.[130]

Al-Jāḥiẓ, Ibn Sīnā, al-Ghazālī and al-Shahrastānī all conceive of prophecy in terms of attributes that are essential to the prophet himself, and argue that the existence of the prophet is necessary by virtue of what he is and does. But how does al-Rāzī conceive of the necessity of prophethood? He writes in the *Maṭālib*:

> We have shown that perfection and imperfection appear in various degrees and disparate levels among people. Therefore, as we are able to see individuals, who have reached great proximity to cattle and beasts in imperfection, stupidity and heedlessness, similarly, on the side of perfection, there will have to exist perfect and virtuous individuals. Necessarily, there will exist among them an individual who is the most perfect and virtuous of them. He will be at the last stages of humanity and the first stages of angelhood.[131]

Earlier in this work, we find a brief, milder form of the argument: since representatives of all the lower human levels exist, it is highly probable (*lā yabʿudu*) that representatives of the most perfect levels exist.[132]

Curiously, al-Rāzī then goes much further in explicating this hierarchy of human perfection. There will have to exist one perfect person in every temporal cycle (*dawr*), whom the Sufis call the 'pole'

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arguments directed at the Sabians are his own; yet he does not admit this, since the *Milal* is meant to contain unbiased accounts of creeds (1, 16).

[129] Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 2, 11 ff. Cf. *Nihāyat al-aqdām*, 463–4, where he refers only to the prophet's perfection, not his ability to perfect others.

[130] Cf. al-Shahrastānī's brief account of Ismāʿīlī prophetology (*Milal*, 1, 193 ff.). On his Ismāʿīlism, see W. Madelung's introduction to his *Muṣāraʿat al-falāsifa* (2–7).

In one place, al-Rāzī explains prophecy in terms akin to al-Shahrastānī's. He writes that two worlds exist: the lower world and the world of spiritual beings (*rūḥāniyyāt*). There necessarily exists in the latter a being, the angelic messenger (*al-rasūl al-malakī*), who is the highest of all beings in it, and the obeyed (*muṭāʿ*) among them. Similarly, there will have to exist, in this lower world, one who is the highest and the one obeyed in it, viz. the 'human messenger'. The former will be the source (*maṣdar*), the latter the manifestation (*maẓhar*) (*Tafsīr*, 1, 264; cf. *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 310. Cf. al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 2, 15).

[131] *Maṭālib*, 8, 105; cf. 1, 261.

[132] *Maṭālib*, 7, 280.

(*quṭb*).[133] He will be what is intended of this elemental world (i.e. the final cause of creation), all other creatures being intended accidentally (*bi-l-ʿaraḍ*). In each group of cycles (perhaps in each thousand years, perhaps more, or less), there will be one person who is the most perfect of all those high individuals, who will be able to perfect others and present a law and a message, viz. a prophet. Al-Rāzī does not explain how he arrives at these conclusions, which betray Sufi and Ismāʿīlī, gnostic influences, to be added to the expanding list of influences on his theory of prophecy. It appears that in formulating his teleological notion of prophecy, which by his time seems to have become a rather commonplace notion, he draws upon a wide and eclectic range of sources.

'Poles' and 'cycles' aside, how does the view that the prophet represents the highest level of perfection in the human species imply that his existence is necessary? Al-Rāzī's argument is akin to an argument advanced by al-Shahrastānī, viz. that each cosmic hierarchy will, necessarily, have actual representatives of each possibility it contains, from the absolute highest to the absolute lowest, from the most perfect to the most imperfect.[134] Both arguments are then reminiscent of a proof of prophecy that Ibn Sīnā advances, viz.

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[133] On this notion, cf. 'Ḳuṭb', *EI²*. The Shīʿa, he adds, call him the 'infallible (*maʿṣūm*) imām' and the 'lord of the age' (*ṣāḥib al-zamān*), and say he is hidden (*ghā'ib*). Al-Rāzī's interpretation is nevertheless heretical from the Imāmī point of view, since he refers, not to the twelfth imām, Muḥammad al-Mahdī, but to members of a line of Sufi poles. He writes:

> [The Imāmīs] are correct in [their] descriptions [of this perfect person]. For since he has none of the imperfections that are in others, he is exempt (*maʿṣūm*) from imperfections. He is the 'lord of the age' because that individual is what is intended in itself in that age. ... He is 'hidden' (*ghā'ib*) from people; for people do not know that that individual is the best and most perfect of the people of that cycle. I would also add that that individual probably does not know that he is the best of the people of that cycle; for though he knows his own state, he will not be able to know the state of others. Therefore, others do not know who that individual is, and he does not know who he really is (*Maṭālib*, 8, 106; cf. 1, 260).

Al-Rāzī here argues that a main factor affecting this human hierarchy is climate, the most perfect people being the inhabitants of Irānshahr, who will produce the most perfect person of his time. Could this be a claim to be himself the renewer (*mujaddid*) of faith at the end of the 6th century A.H.? Cf. Tony Street, "Life and Works", 415.

[134] Al-Shahrastānī, *Milal*, 2, 11 ff.

that since there is a hierarchy of possible human forms of perception (*idrāk*), there will have to appear actual representatives of each. The prophet will be the human being in whom the highest type of perception is actualised most perfectly.[135]

Yet, al-Rāzī introduces a subtle, but crucial, modification to Ibn Sīnā's proof of prophecy. For Ibn Sīnā, the necessity of prophecy is ontological, and rests on his view that for a property to be potential in some beings, it must be actual in at least one other being. In the case of prophecy, the human psychological property in question is intuition (*ḥads*).[136] This is not an argument that al-Rāzī makes.[137] In contrast to Ibn Sīnā's argument from metaphysical necessity, al-Rāzī points out expressly that he bases his view that the appearance of prophets is necessary on induction (*istiqrāʾ*), which is of a type that provides complete certainty (*al-qaṭʿ wa-l-yaqīn*).[138] He argues that from observing natural beings, we recognise a hierarchy of beings that constitutes a cosmological order. When we consider the hierarchy of 'elemental objects', we find that its main divisions (viz. the mineral, the vegetative and the animal) are connected (*muttaṣil*), such that the highest species in the lower division is very similar to the lowest species in the higher division. The same is true of their subdivisions and further subdivisions. Therefore, having found, through observation, actual representatives for each level of possible beings, except one level, we conclude that that level too must have some actual representation. In the case of the human species, which is the most superior subdivision of the animal type, since we find men who are very close to beasts in their characteristics, we will expect that some men who are very close to angels (the next higher form of beings) in their characteristics should exist. In them, both the theoretical and practical faculties will be so perfect and intense that they will have access to higher knowledge and be able to perfect others. They will possess angelic properties and be detached from

[135] Ibn Sīnā, *Ithbāt al-nubuwwāt*, 42–7; cf. M. Marmura, "Avicenna's Psychological Proof of Prophecy".

[136] Cf. M. Marmura, "Avicenna's Psychological Proof of Prophecy", 53; D. Gutas, "Intuition and thinking", 29 ff.; F. Griffel, "Al-Ġazālī's Concept of Prophecy", 112–3.

[137] Griffel ("Al-Ġazālī's Concept of Prophecy", 112–3) seems to suggest that al-Rāzī uses the same line of argument as Ibn Sīnā.

[138] *Maṭālib*, 8, 105; 8, 107.

matter and have control over it, which will enable them to perform miracles. Al-Rāzī writes:

> [Such a person,] who is the most perfect of those perfect, and the best of those most virtuous and knowledgeable, will be at the frontier of the supernal horizon (*ufuq*) of humanity. You have come to know that the end of each species is connected to the beginning of the more superior species. Since the angels are superior to the human species, the end of humanity will be connected to the beginning of angelhood. Since we have shown that that man exists in the highest stages of humanity, it becomes necessary that he be connected to the realm of angels and that he be in their midst.[139]

Since it rests on induction, al-Rāzī's cosmological explanation of prophecy is of a lower metaphysical order than Ibn Sīnā's argument. Rather, it appears more reminiscent of one theory of prophecy presented by al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, who nonetheless does not use it as a proof of prophecy.[140]

Likewise, al-Rāzī's notion of the necessity of prophecy contrasts with the Baghdādī Muʿtazilī view that prophecy is necessary because God has to do what is most advantageous (*aṣlaḥ*) to human beings. A comparable moral consideration is also hinted at in al-Jāḥiẓ's argument. Although al-Rāzī's proof for the necessity of prophecy starts with an objective notion of the human good, and reaches the conclusion that there necessarily has to appear a person or an event whose purpose is to serve this good, it does not imply moral assumptions in relation to God (e.g. that He has to do and command what is good to humans). It rather rests both on the above induction from the observation of natural beings and on a conception of the nature of the perfect human being who has angelic properties.

Yet the latter conception—from which follows that the prophet and his message must have certain essential qualities, which are known by autonomous reason—is also problematic when set against the background of al-Rāzī's earlier theology. For it will imply that a prophet will necessarily possess theoretical and practical perfections and the ability to perfect others in both respects. Such a view is rejected expressly in the classical Ashʿarī notion of prophecy, which only allows for some conditions that should be fulfilled in a true

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139 *Maṭālib*, 8, 107.

140 Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī, *Iʿtiqādāt*, 120–1.

prophet, but in themselves do not prove his prophethood.[141] Thus, a true message will not contradict certain theological truths that are known to reason (none of which are moral), e.g. monotheism. Prophecy may then be proved through miracles only. By contrast, in al-Rāzī's later proof, the style and contents of a message and the character of the claimant of prophecy may themselves constitute its proof. Moreover, these qualities of both the prophet and his message include moral ones. In this instance, al-Rāzī clearly departs from the classical Ashʿarī position.

Prophecy and Human Perfection

So how does the prophet perfect others? This question will lead us into one of the most important aspects of al-Rāzī's later thought, which lies at the background of his exegetical approach in his great commentary on the Qur'ān, the main manifestation of the prophethood of Muḥammad.

In some places, al-Rāzī seems to present the view that the prophet's ability to perfect others lies in the prophet's soul itself, which "emanates lights upon the souls of those who are imperfect" and thereby perfects them.[142] He writes:

> The soul of Muḥammad, peace be upon him, was a powerful, luminous, pure and radiant soul. So if Muḥammad supplicates [God] on [people's] behalf ... effects of his spiritual power will emanate (*fāḍa*) upon their souls. Their souls will become illuminated by this, their spirits will become purified, and they will be transformed from darkness into light, and from corporeality into spirituality.[143]

This notion echoes an earlier, commonplace gnostic view, which finds expression, for instance, in the works of Ikhwān al-Ṣafā.[144]

Yet to say that the prophet perfects others does not refer mainly to this notion, but to his effect on other human beings through his

[141] Cf. al-Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa,* 56 ff.
[142] *Tafsīr*, 17, 116–7.
[143] *Tafsīr*, 16, 183; cf. *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 546.
[144] Ikhwān al-Ṣafā (*Rasā'il*, 3, 347) write, "If complete and perfect souls leave their bodies, they become involved in supporting (*ta'yīd*) imperfect souls attached to matter, so that the latter become complete and the former become perfect".

teachings, guidance and exhortation.[145] Al-Rāzī explains this in a crucial section in his discussion of prophecy in the *Maṭālib* entitled "On the manner of this invitation (*daʿwa*) to God", which follows his explanation of how the prophet is perfect in himself. At the beginning of this section, he notes that although the essential purpose of prophecy is to perfect people by directing them towards matters of religious concern (*dīn*), viz. spirituality and the hereafter, the prophet will also be required to address some matters of this-worldly concern (*dunyā*), since these too are aspects of the human condition. His subsequent discussion, however, concentrates on the former, other-worldly concern, which has three main components, or functions: *(a)* a metaphysical component (the 'past'), corresponding to theoretical perfection, *(b)* a soteriological component (the 'present'), corresponding to practical perfection, and *(c)* an eschatological component (the 'future'), corresponding to the final end of man.[146]

With respect to the first component, the prophet has to teach certain doctrines, which relate, e.g., to the world being created and the Creator's existence, pre-eternity, attributes, transcendence, etc. However, al-Rāzī argues that a prophet should present neither *kalām* nor *falsafa* in affirming and explicating these truths. The style and approach of this first component in any effective prophecy should necessarily have two key features.

Firstly, abstract and complex theological analysis and dialectic will provoke the audience to advance objections and counterarguments, leading to a descent into disputation and squabble. This would completely undermine the aim of prophecy, which, instead, relies on a balance between demonstrations (*burhān*) and rhetorical (*khaṭābī*) arguments, which inculcate fear and desire (*targhīb wa-tarhīb*). For this reason, in all of his later works, al-Rāzī maintains that an effective soteriology will utilise a mixture of demonstrative and

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[145] *Maṭālib*, 8, 111–2; *Tafsīr*, 17, 117.

[146] *Maṭālib*, 8, 115–20; cf. 1, 60–4. This highlights a main difference between the theories of prophecy of al-Rāzī and Ibn Sīnā, who is influenced by al-Fārābī's emphasis on the socio-political aspect of prophecy. One of the main aims of the prophet, for Ibn Sīnā (*Shifāʾ*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 441–3; *Ishārāt*, 3, 226–7), is to provide laws that will maintain social order and wellbeing. For al-Rāzī, who, as we will see, is a socio-political pessimist, the prophet addresses purely social matters, of no immediate relevance to religion, only because they are unavoidable, not because their perfection is an end in itself.

rhetorical arguments, to the exclusion of dialectic (*jadal*), which may be left as a last resort.

In the logic section of *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma,* he compares rhetoric, dialectic and demonstration. Rhetoric, he argues, is more effective than demonstration on common people, who are persuaded by arguments that use widely-accepted (*mashhūrāt*) and admitted (*musallamāt*) premises,[147] more so than by those based on *a priori* premises:

> The ignorance and misguidance of the denier of truth may reach such a level where he will not shy from denying certainties. Yet he will not be able to deny widely-accepted beliefs. For one who denies them will be, as it were, in conflict with most people in this world, which will make him vulnerable to sorts of detriment and calamity.[148]

Rhetorical discourse presupposes the listener's constant and reverential acceptance of the orator's words. However, if one uses the same sorts of premises to discusses opinions (*al-qīl wa-l-qāl*), he will become a dialectician and will compromise the halo of reverence associated with rhetoric.[149]

Al-Rāzī thus argues that the art of rhetoric is superior to dialectic, since "dialectic persuades neither specialists nor common people, whereas rhetoric persuades common people". Dialectic fails to persuade common people for three reasons. *(a)* Dialectical deductions are subtle and beyond the minds of common people. *(b)* "When a common person becomes cornered by a dialectical deduction and unable to reply, he will explain that by his ignorance of the reply, not by the strength of the argument". *(c)* The dialectician assumes a competitive and aggressive stance; therefore, "if one believes that another tries to subdue him and expose his weakness, he will be moved to refute him and not to be persuaded by him". Al-Rāzī continues:

> Indeed, the arts that provide assent (*iqrār*) are demonstration and rhetoric. Demonstration provides certainty for specialists. Rhetoric provides persuasion for common people. God, therefore, says: "Call unto the path of your Lord with wisdom (*ḥikma*) (i.e. demonstration) and kindly exhortation (*mawʿiẓa ḥasana*) (i.e. rhetoric) and argue (*jādil*) with them in the best manner".[150] He mentions dialectic after these two arts, since

[147] On these premises, see: Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt,* 1, 289 ff.
[148] *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma,* 1, 229.
[149] *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma,* 1, 225–6.
[150] Qur. 16:125.

> they aim at positive persuasion, whereas dialectic aims at refutation. The first two provide what should be (*mā yanbaghī*), and the third is for the negation for what should not be [i.e. of opinions].[151]

Al-Rāzī maintains that this method, which combines demonstration and rhetoric is exemplified in the content and literary style of the Qur'ān.

In the *Maṭālib*, he then explains the second feature of prophecy with respect to its cognitive component in a crucial passage, which deserves to be cited in full. This passage, in my view, is key towards fully appreciating the author's exegetical approach in the *Tafsīr*.

> It is inconceivable (*lā yajūz*) for the [prophet] to proclaim pure deanthropomorphism (*tanzīh maḥḍ*);[152] for the hearts of most people repulse from accepting such exposition. If it were proclaimed, it would cause the aversion (*nafra*) of most people from it. Rather, it will be necessary for him to explain that [God], most transcendent and high, is exalted above similitude to temporal things and resemblance to contingents—so He, exalted, says, "Naught is as His likeness";[153] then, afterwards, He says, "He is the Subduer (*al-Qāhir*) over His servants";[154] "Unto Him good words ascend";[155] and "The Beneficent is established on the Throne".[156] He should prohibit them from investigating these defiles and from wading into these subtleties (*daqā'iq*), except for one who is highly intelligent and accomplished, since, by his profound intelligence, he will comprehend the realities of things.
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> [The prophet] also shows to them man's being a producer [of acts] and an agent, capable of both acting and omitting, and of both good and evil; and he does that to the maximum extent (*bālagha*). For were he to present to them pure determinism,[157] they would abandon it and not pay any attention to it. He also explains to them that although things are such, all is by God's decree and determination (*qaḍā' wa-qadar*); so not even as much as an atom in the heavens and the earth will escape His knowledge and judgement. He then prohibits them, in the strongest terms, from wading into these subtleties; for the natures of most men are alien to these matters.
>
> In short, the best method to call people to servanthood to God is the

[151] *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, 1, 252–3. Cf. Ibn Rushd, *Faṣl al-maqāl*, 45 ff.

[152] Notwithstanding, al-Rāzī maintains that exalting God above all aspects of similarity to created beings is, theologically, the correct position. Hence, Book 2 of the *Maṭālib* is devoted to *tanzīh* (cf. *Maṭālib*, 8, 115).

[153] Qur. 42:11.

[154] Qur. 6:61.

[155] Qur. 35:10.

[156] Qur. 20:5.

[157] Reading '*al-jabr*', instead of '*al-khayr*'.

method that was introduced by the master of all prophets, Muḥammad, peace be upon him. For he proclaims God's greatness (*taʿẓīm*) in all respects to the maximum extent, in a general, concise way (*ʿalā sabīl al-ijmāl*), and prohibits [men] from wading into details. So he presents, in affirming deanthropomorphism, His saying, "God is the Self-sufficient and you are the needy".[158] And if He is absolutely self-sufficient, it will be inconceivable that He be composite of parts; it follows that He is not spatial; therefore, it will be inconceivable that He exists in place and space. He also states, "Naught is as His likeness". If He were a body, His essence would have been similar to all bodies, since we maintain that all bodies are alike [in physicality]. He then provides many statements in affirmation (*ithbāt*), and he does that to the maximum extent. This is necessary; for were He not to present such statements, He would not have established [God's] existence for most people.

Also, he goes to the maximum extent in establishing His knowing all objects of knowledge. So he says, "With Him are the keys of the unseen; none but He knows them";[159] and He says, "God knows that which every female bears and that of which the wombs fall short of completion".[160] He then does not explain whether He knows by His essence or by [an attribute of] knowledge.[161]

In many verses, He also explains that man is an agent, a knower, a producer, a creator and an effecter. He then shows in all other verses that all good and evil is from God, exalted. Yet He does not explain how these two contentions may be reconciled; rather, He made general (*ʿalā sabīl al-ijmāl*) belief in both obligatory. He also explains that nothing whatsoever escapes the decree of God, exalted, and His will, judgement and determination. He then explains that [God] neither wills nor performs wrongdoing, vainness or futility.

Therefore, the method (*ṭarīqa*) of our Prophet in his invitation (*daʿwa*) is to proclaim God's greatness in all conceived respects, and to prohibit wading into explaining whether these respects conflict or not. For if we say, "Bad acts are of the agency of men, and are created by God", we proclaim His greatness with respect to power, but we do not proclaim His greatness with respect to wisdom. And if we say, "They are not from God," we proclaim His greatness with respect to wisdom, but we do not proclaim His greatness with respect to power.

As for the Qurʾān, it proclaims God's greatness with respect to both power and wisdom together. Concerning the former He says, "Say,

[158] Qur. 47:38.
[159] Qur. 6:59.
[160] Qur. 13:8.
[161] Which is a major problem in classical *kalām*. Cf. H. Wolfson, *The Philosophy of the Kalam*, 112 ff.

> all is from God",[162] and concerning the latter He says, "Whatever of good befalls you it is from God, and whatever of ill befalls you it is from thyself."[163] He then prohibits people from wading into the investigation of this conflict and eliminating it. Rather, what is obligatory upon common people (*'awāmm*) is absolute belief in proclaiming God's greatness in both power and wisdom. So, in reality, what He states is most correct. For a universal invitation (*da'wa 'āmma*) to God becomes effective only by this method.[164]

Therefore, for prophecy to be universal and all-encompassing, and to effectively transform as many people as possible, its approach should have the following main characteristics. *(a)* It should avoid explicating some subjects in unequivocal and formal theological terms, which will go beyond the mental capabilities of most men, who will find it highly problematic and repulsive. "Presenting pure deanthropomorphism to the public (*jumhūr*) is ineffective; therefore, it is necessary to appeal to a middle way between presenting anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and presenting pure deanthropomorphism, so that [the prophet's] message be accepted by the public".[165] *(b)* Revelation should have a holistic approach to the cognitive aspects of religious experience, by providing a comprehensive and simple expression of the main divine attributes, including power and wisdom. The believer should recognise all these attributes summarily, which will lead him to glorify God in all these respects. *(c)* The prophetic message should then prohibit common people from 'delving deeply' into these theological defiles and subtleties, which would only cause confusion in their hearts and undermine their unquestioning acceptance of the message.

Having discussed the first main component of prophecy, which concerns belief, al-Rāzī then briefly explains the second main component of prophecy, viz. soteriology, which concerns the actual furthering of the theoretical and practical perfections of human beings.[166] As the majority of men need guidance (*irshād*) to their good, prophecy will provide a detailed, tangible and practical path to the realisation of human perfection, mainly through acts of worship, both external

[162] Qur. 4:78.
[163] Qur. 4:79.
[164] *Maṭālib*, 8, 116–8.
[165] *Maṭālib*, 8, 124–5.
[166] *Maṭālib*, 8, 119.

and internal. It should also present these within the framework of a law that makes the pursuit of perfection obligatory upon men. According to al-Rāzī, part of the mission of the prophet is to make belief in prophets and prophethood obligatory.

As regards the third component of prophecy, al-Rāzī does not describe it in detail, but only mentions that it relates to eschatology. In the *Maʿālim*, he contends that autonomous reason may only realise that the afterlife is conceivable, and that the only way to know of it and of what it involves with certainty is through revelation.[167]

In the case of the message of Prophet Muḥammad, al-Rāzī refers to its approach as a whole, especially its cognitive concern, as the 'way (*ṭarīqa*) of our Prophet', or the 'way of the Qurʾān'. He argues that if one examines the efficacy of various religions in perfecting humans, one will find the prophecy of Muḥammad superior to other prophecies.[168]

In his commentary on Ibn Sīnā's *ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, written in the same late period as the *Maṭālib*, al-Rāzī underlines one of his main inspirations for his theory of the perfectionist efficacy of prophecy. He comments on Ibn Sīnā's views on the definition of human perfection, the division of philosophy into practical and theoretical parts, and the division of practical philosophy into politics, economics (*tadbīr al-manzil*) and ethics. He writes:

> *The Shaykh says*: "The principles (*mabdaʾ*) for these three are received from the divine Law (*al-sharīʿa al-ilāhiyya*), and their ultimate developments are described by the divine Law. ..."
>
> *Interpretation*: ... The principles for these three sciences are received from the divine Law; for the objective (*maqṣūd*) of sending prophets to men is to guide men to the correct mode and most advantageous path of action. Since all possible forms of action are encompassed in these three sciences, it should be said that the prophets, on whom be peace, were only sent to indicate (*taʿrīf*) the principles for these three sciences and to delineate their perfections.[169]

Then, on theoretical philosophy and perfection, he writes:

> *The Shaykh says*: "The principles for these divisions of theoretical philosophy are received from the establishers of the divine religion (*arbāb al-milla al-ilāhiyya*) through intimation (*tanbīh*), and they may be

[167] *Maʿālim*, 112.
[168] *Maṭālib*, 8, 121–2; cf. *Maʿālim*, 103–4.
[169] *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 2, 13–4.

acquired in their perfection by the rational faculty through argumentation (*ḥujja*)."

Interpretation: The Shaykh states that both the principles and the ultimate developments of the practical sciences are received from the establishers of revealed laws (*arbāb al-sharā'i'*). With regard to the principles of these theoretical sciences, he mentions that they too are received from the establishers of revealed laws, whereas their perfections and ultimate developments are established by the rational faculty through argumentation.

He describes the difference between the two in the work that he entitles the *Aḍḥawiyya*. He says: The lawgiver is obligated to invite [people] to affirming the existence of God, exalted, His being transcendent (*munazzah*) over imperfections and faults, and His being attributed by the attributes of perfection and the aspects of majesty. As for God not being spatial, and not existing in location or position, these are not among what he has to explicate (*taṣrīḥ*). For such topics are among those at which the wits of most men cannot arrive. Were he to invite people to that, it would repulse them from accepting his invitation (*da'wa*). Undoubtedly, therefore, it is necessary for him to be content with that summary (*mujmal*) invitation. As for minute details, he should not explicate them, but should delegate (*tafwīḍ*) them to the minds of intelligent men. ...[170]

According to al-Rāzī, while revelation is the source for both the general principles and the details of the practical sciences, and consequently for the means to realising practical perfection, it is the source for only the initial stages of human theoretical perfection. Revelation should present a minimal and concise (*mujmal*) creed for men, which is necessary for their theoretical perfection, as well as 'pointers' and 'hints' that turn their attention towards furthering their theological knowledge, without providing a comprehensive theology. Beyond these basic stages, theological knowledge may be acquired primarily by extra-revelatory means.[171]

This stance contrasts sharply with the classical *kalām* approach to theology. Previous *mutakallimūn* viewed theological reflection (*naẓar*) as a form of action, to which a ruling may apply, viz. obligatoriness (*wujūb*). Al-Rāzī describes this voluntarist view of theological knowledge and enquiry in the *Muḥaṣṣal*:

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[170] *Sharḥ 'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, 2, 19–21 (I made much use of Yahya Michot's translation of this passage, "A Mamlūk Theologian's Commentary on Avicenna's *Risāla Aḍḥawiyya*", 154); cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Aḍḥawiyya*, 97–103; 110–3. On the theory of prophecy presented in the *Aḍḥawiyya*, see Y. Michot, *La Destinée de l'homme*, 30–43.

[171] Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā', Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 442–3; M. Marmura, "The Islamic Philosophers' Conception of Islam", 98–9.

> The commonly-accepted explanation of the obligatoriness of rational reflection is [as follows]. Knowing God, exalted, is obligatory, and can only be attained through reflection. What is a basis for a categorical obligation, and falls within the capacity of the obligated agent (*mukallaf*), is obligatory, as will be explained in the [science of] the principles of jurisprudence.[172]

Having the correct creed is Legally obligatory, in the same way that performing certain acts is obligatory. According to classical Ashʿarīs, this obligation stems purely from divine command, whereas the early al-Rāzī departs with this view in favour of a consequentialist notion of Legal obligation. The latter line of argument is used in the *Muḥaṣṣal*:

> *Problem: The obligatoriness of rational reflection is based on scripture, contra the Muʿtazila and some Shāfiʿī and Ḥanafī* fuqahāʾ. Our evidence is: [1] [God's] saying, "We would not punish until we had sent a messenger".[173] [2] Since the basis of obligation is [afterlife] reward and punishment, and since none of God's acts can be [morally] bad, the mind alone will be unable to make conclusive judgements with respect to [afterlife] reward and punishment. Thus, it will not be possible to arrive [by autonomous reason] at the obligatoriness [of reflection].[174]

In classical *kalām* and classical theology generally, theological knowledge is necessary in as much as it is incumbent upon men to know certain things about God and His relation to His creation. He is worshiped fully only when this knowledge (or belief) is combined to correct action. This stance was the main motive for the compilation of creeds (*ʿaqīda*). As such, the main function of Revelation, as far as believers are concerned, is to communicate knowledge of the correct creed and practice to which humans ought to adhere. Revelation acts as a primary source for all types of theological knowledge, except what is required for proving the veracity of Revelation itself. The problem that all theologians had to deal with was to harmonise what seem to be conflicting theological assertions in revealed texts. Most *mutakallimūn* choose to interpret some statements metaphorically (*taʾwīl*). However, in his later works, al-Rāzī maintains that theological statements in revealed texts provide only a minimal theology, since their primary purpose is soteriological, rather than epistemic.

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[172] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 130.
[173] Qur. 17:15; cf. Qur. 10:101, which al-Rāzī cites elsewhere.
[174] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 134. Cf. al-Ṭūfī, *Darʾ*, 98.

According to al-Rāzī, the perfectionist concern of religion, which is its central and ultimate objective, is constant throughout the history of revealed religion. Therefore, this dimension in each particular prophecy is never abrogated by a subsequent one. He describes this concern as being related to both the proclamation of the greatness (*ta'ẓīm*) of the nature and stature (*amr*) of God and compassion (*shafaqa*) towards His creatures, which, elsewhere, he explains as referring to the perfecting of the theoretical and practical faculties of the soul, respectively.[175] Apart from this essential concern, other features of a revealed religion are contextual (*waḍʿī*), and may be abrogated by a subsequent revelation according to changing historical circumstances.[176]

Significantly, after presenting his later theory of prophecy, al-Rāzī totally rejects a crucial part of Ibn Sīnā's theory, viz. his psychological explanation of revelation .[177]

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[175] *Maṭālib*, 7, 230; *Tafsīr*, 12, 53–4; 20, 104; *Lawāmiʿ*, 170. He often mentions that *ta'ẓīm* and *shafaqa* are specified in a *ḥadīth*, which I have been unable to find. Instead, 'Abd al-Qādir al-Jaylānī (d. 561/1166) (*Fatḥ*, 106) cites it as a non-Prophetic aphorism: "Good lies entirely in two words: *al-ta'ẓīm li-amr Allāh 'azza wa-jalla, wa-l-shafaqati 'alā khalqih*". Al-Rāzī writes that all things should be viewed as God's creatures and as signs for His oneness and greatness, and should consequently be given due respect. Living creatures, which experience benefit and harm, should be treated with great compassion, e.g. through filial piety and enjoining good and forbidding evil (*Tafsīr*, 15, 24).

[176] *Maṭālib*, 8, 124. Cf. al-Māwardī, *Aʿlām al-nubuwwa*, 52. Al-Rāzī replies by this to an argument against the possibility of prophecy, made from the same perfectionist notion of the human good that he uses to justify religion: assuming that revealed religion aims to serve human perfection, one religion's abrogation of a previous one is unjustifiable. For the later religion will abrogate either the perfectionist aspects of the previous one, thereby contradicting its purpose, or inessential details, in which case great harms will follow from frivolous differences (*Maṭālib*, 8, 87–9). Al-Rāzī also accepts the traditional justification for abrogation from the corruption of previous religions (*Maṭālib*, 8, 121–2; cf. *Maʿālim*, 103–4).

[177] *Maṭālib*, 8, 127–37. Thus, revelation is not a consequence of the psychological faculties of the prophet, but depends on his hearing God's speech directly, or receiving it via Gabriel, who acts as an intermediary (*Maṭālib*, 7, 389–9; 7, 421). In contrast to Ibn Sīnā's theory, whereby the imagery that appears in scriptural texts stems partly from the prophet's faculty of imagination in its interaction with the Active Intellect and the heavenly souls, and partly from the prophet's own judgement and manipulation of the form and content of scripture, al-Rāzī considers both the form and content of scripture as completely divine. Gabriel receives Qur'ānic revelation in exactly the same form he communicates to the Prophet (*Tafsīr*, 27, 188). Cf. *Tafsīr*, 2, 32: "Gabriel heard God's speech in the heavens, and brought it down unto the Prophet. ... If it is said, "How did Gabriel hear God's speech, when His speech, according to you, is of neither letters nor sounds?" we

Before concluding the present chapter, we should consider how this perfectionism in al-Rāzī's later thought relates to his consequentialist ethics at the normative level. Already, in the beginning of this chapter, we saw how he explains the relation between these two teleological stances at the metaethical level.

Al-Rāzī does not develop a unified normative discipline that combines the different normative stances that he considers to be valid, nor does he present comprehensive guidelines as to how these may be applied consistently and systematically. The relation between *uṣūl al-fiqh*, which represents his normative ethics of action (including the general consequentialist stance), and both *akhlāq* and *riyāḍa*, which represent his ethics of character, remains on the whole unclear. The following is a brief interpretation of how the different normative stances in al-Rāzī's later thought relate to each other.

It is first of all clear that (in sharp contrast with al-Fārābī) he considers the perfectionist stance to pertain exclusively to the private realm. Thus, the furthering of human perfection is the objective of the disciplines of *riyāḍa* and *akhlāq*, but cannot be an objective for the art of politics. As we will see, this owes partly to the great pessimism with which al-Rāzī regards man's socio-political condition.

It is also clear from the foregoing that he analyses prophecy from a teleological standpoint: he considers Revelation to serve more than one main function, including a perfectionist purpose. He outlines a Sufi-inspired soteriology, in which the Law (*sharīʿa*) is the initial stage, aimed at "purifying the exteriors of people from what should not be (*mā lā yanbaghī*)"; then the spiritual path (*ṭarīqa*) is a more advanced stage aimed at "purifying souls from corrupt beliefs and vile traits"; the realisation of truth (*ḥaqīqa*) is the stage of theoretical perfection in which truth manifests in the hearts of spiritual men; and prophecy (*nubuwwa*) is a stage reserved for the elect few, in which the soul becomes absolutely perfect such that it may perfect those imperfect.[178]

say, it could be that God created, for him, a hearing for His speech and provided him with an ability to express that eternal speech. Or it could be that God created, in the Preserved Tablet, a writing in the exact composition [of the Qurʾān], which Gabriel then read and memorised. Or it could be that God created distinct sounds, in this exact composition, which Gabriel then received, and that He then created for him necessary knowledge that this is the expression of the meaning of that eternal speech."

[178] *Tafsīr*, 17, 117.

Yet, alongside serving the other-worldly and spiritual end of man (*dīn*), Revealed Law also serves matters of this-worldly concern (*dunyā*), which relate to the advantage and wellbeing of both the individual and the external world, especially society. Alongside Revealed Law, the more general normative consequentialist ethics (especially as embodied in the principle of unrestricted interest) will also apply to both these worldly, mundane spheres: the private and the public.

Table. How the main normative approaches (columns) apply to the private and public spheres.

	Consequentialism (mundane, physical wellbeing)	Perfectionism (supra-mundane, spiritual wellbeing)
Private sphere	– Revelation: serves the wellbeing of the individual in this world and the hereafter. – Extra-revelatory consequentialist ethics: serves this-worldly private wellbeing.	– Revelation (*sharīʿa*, *Qurʾān*). – Practical ethics (*akhlāq*). – Rational reflection (*naẓar*). – Spiritual discipline (*riyāḍa*). All serve to perfect the individual both theoretically and practically.
Public sphere	– Revelation: serves worldly public wellbeing.[179] – Utilitarian politics: serves public stability and wellbeing.[180]	———

[179] See p. 177 *infra*.
[180] See p. 176–7 ff. *infra*.

CHAPTER FOUR

AL-RĀZĪ'S LATER PESSIMISM: COMMENTARY ON *RISĀLAT DHAMM AL-LADHDHĀT*

The science of character (*ʿilm al-akhlāq*) concerns both the human soul's attribute of power and the sensory appetites of eating and coition: aspects of the soul's association with the physical world, including the physical body and the external world. On the other hand, the soul's attribute of knowledge is perfectible by the theological sciences and spiritual discipline.

In his main book on practical ethics, *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ*, al-Rāzī discusses two types of moral 'therapy': *(a)* 'contemplative' therapy, which involves descriptions of human vices and reasons for why they ought to be replaced with virtues, as well as prescriptions of a contemplative, intellectual nature; and *(b)* practical therapy, consisting of practical prescriptions. This stance represents a form of moral optimism: morality is based on a rational science, and moral perfection is humanly achievable. Al-Rāzī, of course, was likewise an epistemological optimist, as he maintained that metaphysical knowledge is humanly attainable through the exercise of rational reflection.

However, in a later ethical work, *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā* (*Censure of the Pleasures of This World*), written in 604/1208 towards the end of al-Rāzī's life, a very different stance emerges. This work (which is brought to attention and published for the first time in the present volume) consists of three sections, relating to pleasures experienced in the main faculties of perception in man: *(a)* sensory (*ḥissī*) pleasure, corresponding mainly to the physical appetites of eating and coition; *(b)* imaginative (*khayālī*) pleasure, corresponding to the pursuit of rule (*riʾāsa*) and social status (*jāh*); and *(c)* intellectual (*ʿaqlī*) pleasure, corresponding to intellectual pursuit. Normally, the first two are the chief domain of the science of character; the last is served ultimately by theological and philosophical learning. However, in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, al-Rāzī's stance in this regard is radically different. For not only does he offer no prescriptive moral therapies with respect to the first two forms of human activity, he argues that

they present utterly irresolvable moral dilemmas and that intellectual pursuit inevitably culminates in stalemate. This work underscores a pronounced moral and epistemological pessimism in the later stage of his career. As we will see towards the end of the present chapter, al-Rāzī appears to propose an alternative soteriology, which emphasises spiritual discipline and guidance through the Qur'ān.

Dhamm al-ladhdhāt is, first and foremost, a moral, rather than a theoretical, text written in response to a question put to the author by someone who is unknown to us. This character is reflected in the style and the forms of argument used, which often appear rhetorical.[1] Nonetheless, as we will see, the integrity of the main contentions in the work is not compromised. In what follows, we will examine the views presented in this text, as well as their fuller and wider theoretical background in al-Rāzī's thought generally.

The Nature and Extent of Sensory Pleasure and Pain

Al-Rāzī starts the section on sensory pleasures in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* by recalling the premise that human action is produced by either of two primary motives: the averting of pain and the seeking of pleasure (no mention of perfection is made here). However, he adds, pleasure is in fact marginal in the overall human sensory experience, since most of the time man is preoccupied with averting pains. Though garments and houses protect humans from a variety of harms, they form little more than 'lesser evils', since in themselves they are sources for pain and discomfort (e.g. by the garment's weight), rather than pleasure or benefit. They are akin to foul-tasting medicines taken to remedy illnesses.

Of all human sensory activity, only eating and coition seem to produce real pleasure. Al-Rāzī thus makes these two bodily functions the focus of this section, informing the reader from the start that he aims to draw attention "to the vileness, baseness, degradation, and similitude to ignoble beasts that they involve". He writes that the justification that poets and orators advance for this assessment may be summarised in three basic points: *(a)* these pleasures are

[1] By contrast, *al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ* (3) is "a book on the science of character, written in a demonstrative, apodictic method, rather than a rhetorical, persuasive style".

transient and *(b)* inextricably mixed with pains and detriments, and *(c)* vile people have a greater share of them than virtuous people. However, he notes, this reasoning presumes that though they ought to be avoided for these accidental features, these pleasures are essentially good.[2]

By contrast, the *falāsifa* argue that sensory pleasures are inherently contrary to the human good and human happiness. In this regard, two distinct propositions are advanced: *(a)* that these pleasures are real, but essentially base; and *(b)* that they are not real, but are mere relief from pain.

As mentioned, al-Rāzī considers the former proposition and arguments for it to be rhetorical.[3] And, indeed, many of the arguments he lists are akin to the three he attributes to poets and orators.[4] For example, he cites the inductive argument that observation shows that all people hallow ascetics and despise indulgent pleasure-seekers, which will indicate that human primordial nature (*fiṭra*) attests to the baseness of these pleasures.[5] Other arguments emphasise that the physical pains and ailments that result from eating and coition are severe, numerous, long-lasting and often spread in more than one organ in the human body. By contrast, the pleasure experienced in eating decreases sharply after the first morsel or two, whereas coital pleasure occurs only during orgasm, which is "as though an instant (*al-ān alladhī lā yanqasimu*)".[6] And so forth; many of these arguments are commonplace.[7]

In what follows, we shall focus on the latter, possibly demonstrative proposition, that sensory pleasures, "thought to be [real] pleasures, are actually not pleasures, but little more than relief from pain".[8] Al-Rāzī argues that the experience of sensory pleasure presupposes the existence of prior needs (*ḥāja*) and appetites (*shahwa*). Thus, if one were to offer jewellery to a dog and a bone to a man, neither would find pleasure in the object offered, since neither would have

[2] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 6.
[3] See p. 61 *supra*.
[4] Cf. *Nafs*, 88–107; *Maṭālib*, 7, 297–302.
[5] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 11. This is an argument from widely-accepted beliefs, which al-Rāzī will consider to be non-demonstrative, but rhetorical (cf. p. 88 ff. *supra*).
[6] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 13.
[7] Cf. p. 122 *supra*.
[8] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 6.

desire for it. Also, the greater the hunger, or the longer the period of abstinence from coition, the greater the pleasure experienced at gratification—which indicates that the extent of pleasure depends on the extent of the preceding urge.[9]

Yet, other parts of the text seem non-committal with respect to this view; e.g. the statement, "These states are either not pleasures, or, if they are pleasures, they are extremely base and most vile".[10] It is not entirely clear in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* to what extent al-Rāzī is committed to the view that pleasure is unreal. This ambiguity appears to stem from the rhetorical style of this moral text, which was written with a view to persuade the reader into shunning sensory pleasures, rather than to analyse the nature of pleasure as such.

In any case, al-Rāzī concludes this section by stating the global, 'quantitative' assessment that pain is predominant in this world, which is closely related to his 'qualitative' view on the nature of pleasure and pain. He writes: "What prevail over the people of this world are anguish, affliction and grief, whereas pleasure and good are very rare".[11]

But does al-Rāzī truly adhere to such a pessimistic stance, or is it merely a ploy that largely serves the rhetorical purpose of a moral text? It will be instructive to explore his treatment of these themes, viz. the nature and extent of pleasure and pain, in his philosophical works, which lie at the background of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*.

The Nature of Pleasure and Pain

In the *Mabāḥith* and the *Mulakhkhaṣ*—two relatively early *falsafī* works—al-Rāzī opens the section on pleasure and pain by quoting Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's definitions of pleasure as "departure (*khurūj*) from an unnatural state" (i.e. towards the natural state), and pain as "departure from a natural state".[12] The only two possibilities, therefore, are the natural state, which is neutral, and unnatural states, which are comparatively bad. But there cannot be a state superior to the natural state. From this, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī arrives at the view that "pleasure is nothing but relief from pain; and there is

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[9] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 6–7; cf. *Tafsīr*, 18, 219.
[10] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 11.
[11] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 15.
[12] *Mabāḥith*, 1, 387. Cf. Lenn Goodman, "Rāzī's Psychology", 31 ff.

not a pleasure that occurs but after a pain",[13] a view that he also attributes to Plato.[14] Al-Rāzī reports:

> Some deny the existence of pleasure, viz. Muḥammad Ibn Zakariyyā al-Rāzī. He claims that the reality of pleasure is nothing but the negation of pain. Thus, the reality of the pleasure found in eating is nothing but the negation of the pain of hunger; and the reality of the pleasure found in drinking is nothing but the negation of the pain of thirst. ... Most *falāsifa* and *mutakallimūn* reject this claim.[15]

In the *Mabāḥith* and the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, he rejects this view and cites examples of pleasures that cannot be explained in terms of a return to a natural state from a previous unnatural state, thus appearing to be real. One such instance is the enjoyment of a pleasant sight that one does not conceive of beforehand, which, he argues, contradicts the claim that pleasure from sight is due to the negation of the pain of longing.[16] The change in the state, al-Rāzī argues, is in fact only accidental to pleasure, rather than essential.

He then turns to Ibn Sīnā's definitions of pleasure as "perceiving what is agreeable (*idrāk al-mulā'im*)", which is the realisation of perfection in an aspect of the perceiver, and pain as "perceiving what is disagreeable (*munāfī*)".[17] However, is pleasure this type of perception, or a product thereof (which, he notes, is suggested by Ibn Sīnā in at least one place)?[18] Al-Rāzī argues for the latter view: "We perceive, in the acts of eating, drinking and coition, a specific state that is distinct from all other psychological states", the same being true of the perception of pain.[19] Therefore, as sensory perceptions (*ḥissiyyāt*),

> ... the essences of pleasure and pain are perceived as *a priori*, self-evident conceptions (*taṣawwur awwalī badīhī*). Indeed, conceiving them is among the clearest, most evident and most incontrovertible cognitions. But

[13] Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, extracts from *Kitāb al-ladhdha* in *Rasā'il*, 148.

[14] Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, *Shukūk 'alā Jālīnūs*, 17. On the Platonic background to this view, see M. Fakhry, *Ethical Theories*, 72–3.

[15] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 80; cf. *Maṭālib*, 4, 417.

[16] However, Abū Bakr al-Rāzī (*Rasā'il*, 155) argues that looking at unattractive faces produces boredom and thus a departure from the natural state. Seeing a pleasant face afterwards will only relieve that pain.

[17] Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 369; 2, 424.

[18] Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Adwiya al-qalbiyya*, 228–9.

[19] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 88–9.

> the purpose of definition and description is to define what is obscure with what is clear.[20]

Just as statements of assertion (*taṣdīq*) relating to one's sensory experiences do not require demonstration, the conceptions (*taṣawwur*) they involve do not require definition. Hence, the essences of pleasure and pain are known without definition.[21]

> Every rational being, indeed every sense-perceptive being (*ḥassās*), perceives [pleasure and pain] in oneself and, necessarily, differentiates between both and between these and other things. What is so is indefinable. This shows that the view of those who maintain pleasure to be the perception of what is agreeable, and pain the perception of what is disagreeable, is false. For the conceptions 'pleasure' and 'pain' are more evident than the conceptions 'agreeability' and 'disagreeability'.[22]

Al-Rāzī also cites medical evidence, which shows that though some physical ailments are sensed by the individual, they do not produce pain. This indicates that pain is not simply the perception of an unnatural state, and that the latter is not even a sufficient condition for pain.

Objections to Neoplatonist Theodicy

Discussions of the nature of pleasure and pain are often pertinent to more macro-level questions regarding cosmogony, the problem of evil and the assessment of human existence as a whole. Perhaps the most striking example of such a link can be seen in Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's conclusion that evil is prevalent in this world, which follows from his notion that pleasure is purely relief from pain. This conclusion is not expressed clearly in any of his surviving works, but is reported in the following hostile account by Maimonides (d. 601/1204):

> [He] has written a famous book, which he has entitled [the *Ilāhiyyāt*]. He filled it with the enormity of his ravings and his ignorant notions. Among them there is a notion that he has thought up, namely, that there is more evil than good in what exists; if you compare man's wellbeing and his pleasures in the time span of his wellbeing with the pains, the heavy sufferings, the infirmities, the paralytic afflictions, the

[20] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 89.
[21] *Mabāḥith*, 1, 388–9.
[22] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 161a.

> wretchedness, the sorrows, and the calamities that befall him, you find that his existence—he means the existence of man—is a punishment and a great evil inflicted upon him. He began to support this opinion by inductively examining these misfortunes.[23]

Abū Bakr al-Rāzī advances a theodicy that justifies this state of affairs, to which we return further below in this section. We shall first examine al-Rāzī's chief concern, which is Neoplatonist theodicy, particularly as advanced by Ibn Sīnā.[24]

The existence of evil in this world, which emanates from the First Cause, which is absolutely good and whose effect should also be good, constitutes a serious problem to Neoplatonist cosmogony. Ibn Sīnā tries to diminish the reality and amount of evil in the physical world (which he considers to be the best of all possible worlds) and the cosmos as a whole: he contends that it only appears in the sub-lunar world and only affects individuals for limited periods rather than whole species perpetually. He also distinguishes between what is evil essentially and what is evil accidentally. The former type consists of imperfections in entities (e.g. the absence of sight, life or knowledge in a human being) and is hence fundamentally non-existent. Accidental evils include acts and events produced by qualities that constitute perfections in their agents or causes (e.g. the quality of burning in fire), and that accidentally cause harm to some other beings, though on the whole their good outweighs their harm. If the entity harmed has perception, it may perceive the harm it receives; and this perception will be its experience of pain.

According to Ibn Sīnā, the qualities that may cause harm to some entities accidentally are brought into being for the sake of their serving the greater overall good: the cosmic order. Not to bring them into being would constitute a greater evil than the evil they may cause

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[23] Maimonides, *Guide*, 3, 443 (Pines's translation); cf. Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, *Rasā'il*, 179–80; al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 5, 137; Ibn Taymiyya, *Majmū'*, 6, 308. In a section on Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's cosmogony, al-Rāzī quotes him stating that the world is 'full' of evils (*Maṭālib*, 4, 409; 4, 413).

[24] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 519–23; *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 78 ff. Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 355–6; 2, 414–22; *Najāt*, 320–6; *Ishārāt*, 3, 299 ff.; Ikhwān al-Ṣafā, *Rasā'il*, 4, 10–8; cf. Shams Inati, *Ibn Sînâ's Theodicy*, 65 ff. Anyone who reads al-Rāzī's account of Ibn Sīnā's theodicy in the *Mabāḥith* will conclude that he completely accepts it, except that the last few lines hint at a different stance, and refer the reader to earlier discussions of whether God is a necessitating cause or a voluntary agent (cf. citation from the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, p. 167–8 *infra*).

accidentally. And while an absolutely good being exists (viz. God), purely, or predominantly, evil beings are inconceivable. This appeals to the Neoplatonic doctrine that existence is good, and non-existence evil; as such, a thing cannot, at once, exist and be purely evil.

For Ibn Sīnā, therefore, evil may be abundant, yet it is unprevailing (*aqallī*), rather than predominant (*aktharī*), in the entirety of being.[25] Or, as al-Rāzī reports, "evil is unprevailing (*maghlūb*) and good is predominant (*ghālib*)".

In refuting this theodicy, al-Rāzī starts by objecting to the Neoplatonic association between good and existence, and between evil and non-existence. He writes in the *Mulakhkhaṣ*:

> *On that the Existent is Good, and the Non-Existent Evil.* This is a generally-accepted (*mashhūra maqbūla*) premise, which I have found no one support with a demonstration. Instead, they are only content with relying on an example; viz. killing is not evil in so far as it is produced by the agency of a killer, or by virtue of the weapon being injurious, or the killed person's limb being susceptible to injury, but by virtue of the departure of life from the body; therefore, only this negation is evil, whereas all other, real aspects are good. You know that examples are insufficient in establishing scientific premises.[26]

Al-Rāzī completely dismisses Ibn Sīnā's ontological notion of good and evil, which many others accept uncritically. What do 'good' and 'evil', he argues, mean in the propositions, 'Good is existence' and 'Evil is non-existence'? If 'existence' and 'non-existence' are predicates in these propositions (rather than simply explanatory of what 'good' and 'evil' mean), then the conceptions of their subjects, viz. 'good' and 'evil', will be required. Yet, al-Rāzī argues, Ibn Sīnā fails to define them.[27] Also, in his commentary on *'Uyūn al-ḥikma*, we find the following argument that highlights a similar failing:

> Minds and hearts become perplexed by the abundance of pain they witness in this world. The justification that the *falāsifa* advance for this is that pleasure and benefit are more [widespread] than pain and harm, and that this minor amount of pain occurs because it is impossible to realise those preponderant benefits except with these minor harms. They say: "Omitting a great good for the sake of a little evil is a great evil".
>
> [But this is] a proposition, in which the subject is 'omitting a great

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[25] Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 326. Cf. Y. Michot, *La destinée de l'homme*, 63–4.
[26] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 89a.
[27] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 79–80.

> good for the sake of a little evil', and the predicate is 'a great evil'. If, by 'a great evil', which is the predicate, [they] mean 'omitting a great good', the predicate of the proposition will be identical to its subject—which makes the statement meaningless. Or, if [they] mean, by 'great evil', 'great pain', then this statement will mean 'Omitting a great good for the sake of a little evil is a great pain'. However, this is obviously absurd; for had these things not existed, pain, pleasure, evil and happiness would not have occurred.[28]

In the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, Ibn Sīnā's views and arguments in this regard are described as 'nonsense' (*ṭāmmāt*, lit. calamities).[29]

One may wonder, however, whether this refutation does not come into conflict with al-Rāzī's own definition of 'good' and 'bad' in terms of essential perfection and imperfection. This does not seem to be the case; for, as we saw, he does accept a perfectionist definition of value, but only one that takes the human perceiver as its primary reference point, with respect to the perception of either a subjective aspect of perfection, or an objective aspect of perfection in an external entity. To say that the courage of a given epic hero is 'good' only refers to the perceiver's love of, and attraction to, this quality as an aspect of perfection, but not to this quality being somehow intrinsically good, e.g. in an ontological sense, irrespective of any perceiver. Yet, for al-Rāzī, even subjective perfection is not at issue in the problem of evil. Instead, he appeals to his other notion of good and bad in terms of the experiences of pleasure and pain. He writes:

> In generally-accepted convention (*al-ʿurf al-ʿāmm al-mashhūr*), what people mean by the expression 'evil' (*sharr*) is 'pain and what leads to it'. And it is known immediately that pain is real (*wujūdī*)—this is not disputed by sensible men. Indeed, some even claim that pleasure is the mere relief from pain; so they consider it unreal. This being the case, it becomes evident that what people mean by the word 'evil' is real, whereas 'good' may refer to the non-existence of pain, ... or to pleasure.[30]

By affirming what 'good' and 'evil' mean in ordinary language, al-Rāzī counters Ibn Sīnā's ontological and cosmological theodicy with the very human experience of suffering. This is what "minds and hearts become perplexed by", and consequently what any attempted theodicy ought to address. Ibn Sīnā's theodicy merely circumvents the real problem of evil.

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[28] *Sharḥ ʿUyūn al-ḥikma*, 2, 79–81; cf. 3, 131–2.
[29] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 350b.
[30] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 80; cf. *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 350a.

Al-Rāzī, therefore, wonders why Ibn Sīnā attempts a theodicy in the first place, given that he is not a moral realist and that he does not consider the Creator to be a voluntary agent, in which case He cannot be morally responsible for His acts.[31] His introduction of the terms 'good' and 'evil' into the context of ontology is superfluous (*fuḍūl*) and inapt. Instead, he should have left the attempt to justify evil in this world to those for whom it is a real problem, since they adhere to these two doctrines, particularly the Muʿtazila.

Now, on pain, Ibn Sīnā writes, rather ambiguously, that "though pains and grief are real properties, rather than unreal (*ʿadam*), they seem to be in the same situation as (*tatbaʿu*) non-existent things and imperfections".[32] He recognises that pain, as a psychological perception, is real. Yet it is a perception of something unreal, viz. imperfection, and should thus be treated effectively as another unreal evil. Alternatively, he could have intended to say that, though real, pain should in the final analysis be treated as a mere imperfection in man. In either case, Ibn Sīnā makes a very cursory dismissal of pain, and disregards the individual's experience of suffering. Instead, he approaches theodicy with a purely ontological conception of evil.[33]

By contrast, al-Rāzī affirms the reality of pain, as a real, simple and primary perception, which is recognised immediately and cannot be explained away. Having made a clear distinction between the perception of pain and the perception of its objective cause (e.g. injury in the body of the experient of pain), al-Rāzī highlights the subjective experience of suffering, which is brushed aside in Ibn Sīnā's ontological analysis. Moreover, for al-Rāzī, pleasure and pain define the most fundamental conceptions of good and evil. And it is this subjective experience of pain, rather than the objective imperfection perceived, that is evil and that any theodicy should attempt to justify.[34]

Al-Rāzī goes further than defining evil in terms of pain, to contend-

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[31] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 78–9.

[32] Ibn Sīnā, *Najāt*, 323; *Shifāʾ*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 419.

[33] Cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Al-Ishāra ilā fasād ʿilm aḥkām al-nujūm*, 10 ff.

[34] This criticism became influential after al-Rāzī. Al-Shīrāzī (d. 1050/1640) (*Ḥikma*, 7,62–7) cites al-Dawwānī (d. 908/1502) arguing that the existence of pain contradicts the view that evil is non-existent. Al-Shīrāzī defends Ibn Sīnā's definition of pain as 'perceiving the disagreeable' and argues that pain is nevertheless unreal, since it is an instance of knowledge by presence (*ʿilm ḥuḍūrī*) with its object being unreal.

ing that evil is indeed prevalent in this world. The view is presented most definitively in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, which al-Rāzī considers to contain his most comprehensive refutation of Neoplatonic theodicy.[35] In comparison to his earlier works, the *Mabāḥith* and the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, he here seems more favourable to Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's denial of the reality of pleasure, though he does not accept it. He writes that even if it is conceded that pleasure can be real, observation shows that *most* pleasures are unreal and that real pleasures are extremely rare, whereas all pains are real. As does Abū Bakr al-Rāzī before him, al-Rāzī argues from particular empirical examples from daily human experience.[36] Health is merely the absence of physical ailments and pain, and is, therefore, not pleasurable. Eating, drinking, coition, wearing garments, dwelling in houses, and experiencing a cooling breeze on a warm day, are not pleasurable, but merely alleviate the pains of hunger, thirst, coital desire, cold and heat, respectively. He adds:

> What is prevalent over the conditions of men is either pain or the relief from pain, whereas the occurring pleasure, which is an existent phenomenon (*kayfiyya wujūdiyya*) other than the negation of pain, is extremely rare, as if a drop in an ocean, such as finding pleasure in a sight, sound, etc. that is unknown before being perceived. As for pains, they are untold, though some are extremely severe, such as illnesses, while others are mild, which are things that one is preoccupied with most of his time, such as afflictions, anxieties, fear, dread, shyness, anger, pains that occur at hunger, thirst, working in trades and professions, smelling pungent smells, meeting imbeciles, seeing odious sights, the harms caused by flies, flees, lice and ants, as well as all other things that are too numerous to recount.
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> If it is proven that pains are preponderant (*ghālib*) and that real pleasures are unprevailing (*maghlūb*), and if those few pleasures were the purpose of creation and existentiation, then, given the Creator's knowledge of the occurrence of numerous pains, ... the prevalent evil would be for the sake of an unprevailing good. It becomes evident that what [the *falāsifa*] claim, viz. that good is preponderant in this world, is false. Let it not be said that though disease is widespread, health is prevalent. For we will say that we have shown that health is a non-existent state (*ḥāla ʿadamiyya*), which is man's being free from

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[35] Therefore, he omits the discussion in the *Muḥaṣṣal* (478) and simply refers the reader to *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*.

[36] Cf. Maimonides' citation, p. 160–1 *supra*. On this kind of argument against optimism, cf. Eric Ormsby, *Theodicy*, 9 ff.

> both pleasure and pain. ... Therefore, remaining in non-existence is preferable (*al-baqā' ʿalā l-ʿadam awlā*).[37]

In the *Ishārāt*, Ibn Sīnā also considers evil in human nature, having explained evil generally. Why are humans predominantly ignorant and under the sway of desire and irascibility? He argues that humans fall into three main groups: *(a)* those who are advanced theoretically and morally, and will experience great happiness in the hereafter; *(b)* those who are not advanced in these respects, but are in a mediocre state, and who will have a neutral outcome (*salāma*) where they may experience some happiness in the hereafter; and *(c)* those who possess evil traits and will experience misery in the hereafter. While the two extremes are rare, most humans fall into the second group.[38] If we consider the first two groups, who will be saved (*najāt*) from torment, we will find that they constitute the overwhelming majority of people. Therefore, for Ibn Sīnā, evil in human nature, too, is unprevailing.

However, al-Rāzī argues that, as with physical health, the 'neutral state' denotes the absence of both pain and pleasure, and, as such, is not good in itself and cannot justify creation. Yet, he continues, even if this justification is conceded, Ibn Sīnā's quantitative premise cannot be. For while it is the case that most human souls are devoid of both true and false opinions, most are not morally neutral, but characterised with a wide range of moral vices, such as desire, irascibility, and attachment to wealth, material things and status.

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[37] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2 80–1; cf. *Arbaʿīn*, 294–5. This view is echoed in various places in al-Rāzī's writings; e.g. *Tafsīr*, 19, 71 (meter: *ṭawīl*):

> I behold the scenes of this perishing world,
> Intertwined with dreads and sorrows;
> Its goods, as if frightening dreams,
> Its evils, on men, perpetual and thorough.

Cf. *Tafsīr*, 17, 118:

> Physical pleasures do not last. So the greater the pleasure found in them, the greater and more severe the sorrows that result from the fear of their negation. Al-Maʿarrī [*Saqṭ al-zand*, 51 (meter: *khafīf*)] thus said: "Indeed, grief at the hour of death is times as much as happiness at the hour of birth". It is well known that the happiness that occurs at the time of the birth of a child is not equivalent to the grief that occurs at its death.

[38] Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 3, 306–8.

Indeed, both the virtuous and the morally neutral, combined, are "as a drop in the ocean".[39]

In his wider assessment of the human condition and his criticism of Neoplatonic theodicy, al-Rāzī only asserts that most pleasures are unreal, specifically in relation to worldly pleasures. Yet he avoids Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's claim that pleasure as such is unreal, which will exclude even the possibility of spiritual pleasure.[40] For this reason, he does not arrive at global pessimism. At the end of the section on theodicy in *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, he concludes on a highly personal note:

> As for me, though God has bestowed wellbeing (*salāma*) upon me in most conditions, so that I am as though distinct in this from most [people], if I go back to myself and compare real (*ḥaqīqī*) pleasures (i.e. excluding unreal (*ʿadamī*) ones) to pains, both external and internal, as we have listed, we will find pleasures so wretched in comparison to pains. This being the case, how could such pleasures, in relation to these pains, be desirable! Were it not for the great afterlife pleasures that we long for, it would have been best to have remained non-existent.[41]

The possibility of spiritual happiness is the only exit from despair. Yet this can only be a solution to a very human problem, rather than a premise for a theodicy. Al-Rāzī would argue that the possibility of spiritual pleasure still does not make creation rationally justifiable. For though God is capable of creating rational souls in a state of complete perfection and happiness, without attachment to matter, He chose to create human beings in this physical world with all its misery.

Al-Rāzī summaries his stance in the passage that concludes the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, as follows:

> With respect to the elements [i.e. the sublunar world], we do not accept that the good is prevalent in them. For the good, according to [our] present convention, is pleasure; and we do not accept that what prevails in the world of generation and corruption is pleasure. Indeed, there are some who even deny [the reality of] pleasure per se, and claim that it has no reality (*maʿnā*) other than the negation of pain. According to this view, no state would exist but either pain or relief from it. Pain is not good; and relief from it is unreal, so it too is not good.

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[39] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 82–3.
[40] This is implied in *Nafs*, 97.
[41] *Sharḥ al-Ishārāt*, 2, 81–2.

> Some then contrived (*iḥtāla*) to find cases where pleasure was affirmed without involving relief from pain. However, assuming such cases are valid (though their validity is in fact questionable), they are rare. As such, it does not become true that good prevails. Rather, pain and the negation thereof prevail, whereas pleasure is rare. Thus, their argument[42] will backfire, since evil is prevalent (*ghālib*); or, if not prevalent, it is on a par [with good]. This being the case, to initiate creation would be either foolish (*safah*) or futile (*ʿabath*).
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> [As for Ibn Sīnā]'s claim that 'separating good from evil is not possible', we say that this presupposes the denial of divine choice. Otherwise, [God] is capable of creating an object such that it is hot when it is needed for a benefit, and not hot when it becomes harmful.[43] Know that deliverance from these confusions is possible only by upholding one of two claims: [*a*] that God is a necessitating cause, in which case this whole dispute will be nullified; or [*b*] that God is a voluntary agent, alongside the denial of ethical realism (*al-ḥusn wa-l-qubḥ*), and that "He cannot be questioned for His acts",[44] which is the clear truth.[45]

If one were to judge God on account of the magnitude of creaturely suffering in this world, one could only conclude that bringing this world into being was a sorely cynical undertaking. Al-Rāzī maintains that the only stance that will not face this difficulty will be one in which God's free choice is affirmed and moral realism is rejected. God creates what He wishes, and His acts cannot be judged morally. As such, any attempt to advance a working theodicy will be futile.

For this reason, al-Rāzī also rejects Abū Bakr al-Rāzī's theodicy, in which he attempts to relieve God, who is absolutely good, of responsibility for this miserable world where creatures only suffer. Abū Bakr al-Rāzī argues that if this physical world were created by God, why would He censure it in revealed religions and warn people from becoming attached to it? Rather, the coming of this world into being is the responsibility of the Soul, which, out of its sheer

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[42] I.e. the Neoplatonic argument that since the world is predominantly good, not to create it would have been bad. God thus creates the world necessarily, since He is absolutely good.

[43] He explains this more clearly in the *Mabāḥith* (2, 523): "Burning that occurs after fire is not necessitated by fire. Rather, God chooses to create it immediately after (*ʿaqība*) contact with fire. If the occurrence of burning after contact with fire is by the choice and will of God, exalted, then He can choose to create burning when it is good, and not to create it when it is bad."

[44] Qur. 21:23.

[45] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 350b–51a.

ignorance, desired to attach itself to matter.[46] Ever since then, the living manifestations of the Soul in this world suffered, and they will continue to suffer until the Soul's union with matter finally ceases. Once the Soul is completely liberated from matter, the world will disappear and evil will be no more. Yet, having witnessed the result of this union, God ameliorates the physical world and inserts order and various comforts into it, in as much as possible. He also introduces reason, which serves to emancipate the Soul from matter, gradually as it advances through metempsychosis.[47]

For al-Rāzī, the answer to this view is straightforward:

> The argument for this doctrine revolves around [the view that "as God is] merciful and beneficent, He ought not to commit an act that would lead to pain and harm". However, if we contend that moral rationalism is false, and that He does whatever He pleases, and decrees in [whichever manner] He wills, this position will be completely invalidated.[48]

There is neither a need nor a basis for theodicy, even if one were to accept such an extreme pessimism as advanced by Abū Bakr al-Rāzī. God's acts need not, and cannot, be justified morally.

Socio-Political Pessimism

It transpires from the foregoing that the view presented in the first section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* concerning the nature of pleasure and the prevalence of suffering in this world represents a genuine stance to which al-Rāzī is committed, especially in his later philosophical writings. Yet, as a moral text, *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* employs a rhetorical form of discourse and pays less attention to rigour, exactitude and the overall perspective. The same is true of the second section of this work, which deals with what al-Rāzī terms 'imaginative pleasures', i.e. pleasures experienced within the faculty of imagination in connection to the individual's involvement in the external world.

Much of the interest of this second section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*

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[46] For Abū Bakr al-Rāzī, Soul is one of the five 'eternals', the others being God, matter, space and time. Cf. his *Al-Qawl fī l-qudamā' al-khamsa* in his *Rasā'il*, 191–216.

[47] See *Maṭālib*, 4, 401–19. Cf. Marwan Rashed, "Abū Bakr Al-Rāzī et le *Kalām*", 41–6.

[48] *Maṭālib*, 4, 419.

lies in its being one of the few places in which we find glimpses of al-Rāzī's socio-political thought. Again, what we find in this section is not a complete, or even rudimentary, socio-political theory, but a moral treatment of aspects of the human socio-political condition, focusing especially on the subjective experience, which is nonetheless a crucial part of al-Rāzī's socio-political thought.

The Original State of Human Social Nature

Introducing this second section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, al-Rāzī states that his purpose is to show *(a)* that the pleasures of rule and high status (*ri'āsa wa-jāh*) can only be accompanied with great hardship and severe pains, and *(b)* that these pleasures are in themselves vile and unworthy.[49] For these contentions, twenty arguments are advanced.

The first argument is most instructive. Al-Rāzī writes:

> Every man desires that he becomes the ruler over others, and that all else falls under his domination, control and power. For man's being dominant over the other and in effective control over him is an attribute of perfection; and attributes of perfection are desired for their own sake. One's being dominated by another and under his control is an attribute of imperfection; and attributes of imperfection are hated in themselves. Therefore, the natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*) of each person drives him to be the ruler over the other and in control over him, and to disallow the other from becoming a ruler over, and controller of, him.
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> Therefore, the seeker of the attainment of rule for a particular man is that particular man alone, whereas all others seek to undermine that rule and to obliterate it. That single man is thus the only seeker of the attainment of that rule for himself. As for all other people, from east to west, they all seek to undermine it, negate it, and obliterate it. Hence, on the one hand, those who seek to realise this aim cannot be fewer in number, for there cannot be fewer than one, while, on the other hand, those who seek to undermine and negate it are very great in number, for it is evident that everyone other than that one will seek to negate that rule and to undermine that person's supremacy.[50]

The same argument is summarised in the *Tafsīr*.[51] As mentioned, al-Rāzī holds that human nature seeks to acquire attributes of per-

[49] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 16.
[50] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 16–7; cf. *Nafs*, 143.
[51] *Tafsīr*, 18, 220.

fection for their own sake and to avoid attributes of imperfection in themselves. The perfection of the individual's attribute of power is realised by furthering his domination over external entities, especially other human beings, and by minimising the control and influence of others over him.[52]

Inevitably, the self-regarding motives of different human beings will come into conflict, as each attempts to advance his own interests at the expense of others. Moreover, "each person will have his own character traits (*khuluq*), and his own dispositions (*ṭabʿ*); what is good for this person is bad for that person, and vice versa". This could only lead to enmity and discord.[53] Al-Rāzī argues that, fundamentally, every man will be involved in a ceaseless struggle of one against all, and all against one.

Yet this view of human nature will face the same empirical objection that Muʿtazilī moral realists advance against his psychological egoism: viz. observation shows that people do in fact assist others without expecting any benefit for themselves in consequence.[54] Thus, multitudes of people may support a single individual in attaining leadership for himself, sacrificing their own lives and wealth in the course.[55] Al-Rāzī replies that this happens only when two conditions are satisfied: *(a)* that one be hopeless of attaining this leadership for himself; and *(b)* that one uses such assistance as means to attaining some benefit for himself, which otherwise would not have been possible. Whenever any of those allies finds it opportune to turn against the leader to seize power for himself, he will be motivated to do so without delay.

By the same principle, the greater one's efforts to dominate over others, or the greater his domination over others, the greater will be the risk of detriment that he will face.[56]

> The more pleasurable a thing, the greater the desire to acquire it and to eliminate obstacles from it. When others attain leadership, that will be one of the greatest obstacles from my attainment thereof. So the desire to eliminate that obstacle will be the greatest of desires. Therefore,

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[52] Cf. *Nafs*, 22–3; 129–33.
[53] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 26.
[54] Cf. p. 76 ff. *supra*.
[55] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 17.
[56] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 20.

> whoever aspires to attain leadership will invite people to kill him and will increase their interest in destroying and eliminating him.[57]

With respect to any given attribute, every individual will be superior, equal, or inferior to others. Superiority to others in a given attribute will motivate them to undermine it as much as possible, either by attempting to eliminate it if it is a destructible attribute, such as power, or by attempting to obscure it if it is an indestructible attribute, such as knowledge. Equivalence to others in a particular attribute will lead to a similar outcome, since uniqueness (*waḥdāniyya*; *tafarrud*) is an attribute of perfection, while sharing an attribute with others is an attribute of imperfection. Finally, though by inferiority, one escapes the active and determined enmity of others, one will become treated despicably, as any other vile and lowly thing. This type of relation is not only symptomatic of human interaction, but is a universal principle:

> Physicians even say that whenever a particular organ becomes weak, stronger organs will send all [their] refuse to it. On the whole, the domination of the strong over the weak is of the concomitants of being (*min lawāzim al-wujūd*). So it becomes evident that the state of man always falls in one of these three categories. ... Therefore, this corporeal life is never dissociated from sorrow, grief and heartbreak.[58]

Rarely does the psychological egoism at the centre of al-Rāzī's ethics receive such pronounced expression. He describes human nature as being motivated almost uncontrollably by the endless drive for power, domination, uniqueness and the elimination of competitors. Those who do experience the pleasures associated with power and rule will become desirous of experiencing more; the more they experience, the greater and more urgent will the desire become.[59] Moreover, since man finds pleasure only during a change in his state, but not afterwards as the new state settles, he will continue to seek more and will never feel contented in any state, even if he "were to possess the treasures of the heavens and the earth".[60]

Given this view of human social nature, al-Rāzī concludes that the great harms that result from the human social condition and the brutality of the ceaseless struggle and competition will guarantee

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[57] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 20.
[58] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 21.
[59] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 18–9.
[60] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 23.

all, both ruler and ruled, oppressor and oppressed, great pains and detriments. Human social existence, as one facet of man's wretched worldly existence, is inescapably a life of ceaseless strife, tension and merciless struggle to prevail, evade detriment and survive. The greater the struggle, the greater the risks of detriment and death, and the more violent the likely outcome.

The following passage, which appears in the *Tafsīr* as a commentary on the greeting 'Peace be upon you' (*al-salāmu ʿalaykum*), presents a vivid depiction of the original state of human nature.

> There is no doubt that this world is a hotbed for evils, detriments, calamities and terrors. Scholars who investigate the obscure aspects of human character (*akhlāq*) differ on whether the origin of the nature of the animal (*al-aṣl fī jibillat al-ḥayawān*) is good or evil. Some say that its origin is evil, and that all human individuals are as though in perfect agreement on this.
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> We may complement this by adding: Indeed, even all animals are as though in perfect agreement on this! The evidence to this is that whenever a man sees another man whom he does not know running towards him, he will be driven by his nature to take guard against him and to prepare to repulse him. Had his natural disposition (*ṭabʿ*) not testified that the original nature of man is evil, primordial mind (*fiṭrat al-ʿaql*) would not have necessitated the preparation to repulse the evil of that comer. They even say that this feature appears in all animals; for every animal, which finds another animal running towards it, will escape and take guard against it. So, had it been evident in its natural disposition that the original nature of this comer is good, it would have necessitated it to stay where it was; for the original disposition of [animal] nature motivates it towards desiring the attainment of the good. ... So we know that the original state in the animal is evil.
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> Therefore, we say: Averting evil is more important (*ahamm*) than attaining good. This is indicated by a number of aspects. First, averting evil involves preserving the original state, which is more important than attaining more. Second, delivering the good to everybody is not within capacity, whereas abstaining from harming anybody is within capacity, since the former is action, whereas the latter is abstention. ... Third, if evil is not averted, evil will occur; and this will result in the occurrence of pain and grief ...; but if goodness is not attained, man will remain in neither good nor bad, but in original wellbeing. ...
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> So it becomes evident [1] that the averting of evil is more important than the attainment of good; [2] that this world is the hotbed of evils, detriments, calamities and afflictions; and [3] that the animal, in the origin of its created nature and the necessity of primordial disposition, is a source for evil. Therefore, when a man reaches another man, the most important consideration will be to inform him that, in relation to himself, he is in a state of peace, security and safety. So, it has become

> conventional (*iṣṭilāḥ*) that [the comer] should initiate the greeting, which is for him to say, "Peace be upon you!"[61]

From the foregoing, al-Rāzī seems to conclude that good and just government is virtually impossible, and that political activity involves great unavoidable detriment to both subjects and political agents. The ruler will often find himself in great dilemmas, forced to choose between two or more equally evil options.[62] For instance, he may act either humbly and benevolently, or despotically and brutally, towards his close associates: either way, he will live in constant fear. Humility and benevolence are bound to weaken his power, whereas brutality will motivate others to kill him, or to eliminate his rule. If it is said that balance (*tawassuṭ*) is required, then, al-Rāzī argues, the nature of this balance is unknown.

Also, just rule should involve appointing qualified individuals in positions of power. Yet, al-Rāzī argues, such rule is an ideal that either never occurred, or is extremely rare. Unjust rule, on the other hand, will bring upon the ruler the enmity and condemnation of all sensible and pious men.[63] A just and widely satisfactory distribution of wealth also appears to be an unsolvable dilemma.[64]

Some of the arguments put forth in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* seem to conclude that the individual has many good reasons to minimise his social association (*mukhālaṭa*) and political involvement, or even to abandon it altogether (*farra*; *iʿtazala*). However, man is political by nature (*madanī bi-l-ṭabʿ*). For if one were to live in reclusion (*tafarrada*) in a desert, away from the material, moral and intellectual benefits of urban life, he would lose his human attributes and descend into bestiality. Thus, whether or not one becomes socially involved, one is bound to suffer great harms.[65] Indeed, even the most rudimentary forms of social association will involve unsolvable dilemmas: "Man may live in this world with or without spouse and offspring: each option will be a cause for suffering detriments and calamities!"[66] Family life will cause suffering to the individual in various ways, including the constant obligation upon him to manage the family's

[61] *Tafsīr*, 16, 182–3.
[62] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 24–5.
[63] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 29.
[64] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 29–30.
[65] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 25–6.
[66] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 27.

affairs and to secure its livelihood, and having malevolent members in the family. However, by choosing to live without a family one will either maintain all his needs by himself, which will involve severe hardship, or will resort to relying on strangers, an option that will lead to other sorts of harm.

Man is bound to suffer, whether as ruler or ruled. Man suffers if he acts, and suffers if he attempts to refrain from acting altogether, choosing to remain idle (*muʿaṭṭal*). A most baffling fact that invites contemplation, al-Rāzī notes, is that, despite this inescapable suffering, which is concomitant not only to the human condition, but to animals in general, every animal will be extremely fearful of death, and will always struggle to avoid or postpone it as much as possible.[67]

Some of the themes of the second section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* are akin to those presented in a section on 'contemplative therapies for desiring status' in *Kitāb al-Nafs wa-l-rūḥ*.[68] These therapies are aimed at minimising one's desire for, and seeking of, higher social status, and attempt to solve some of the dilemmas of the social aspect of human existence. In a way, this section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* recommends the minimisation, or even the total abandonment, of socio-political pursuit and ambition. At the end of one argument, al-Rāzī concludes that the sensible person ought not to pursue leadership.[69] In some places, he concludes that both the pursuit of leadership and actually having it are highly detrimental and unrecommended.

Yet the text goes further. It contends that it will be impossible to reach an agreeable state for the individual's social being, or any adequate solutions to its many moral dilemmas; even attempting to abandon it, if at all possible, will be highly detrimental. "There is no way to avert such detriment". "Man will never become free from grief, anxieties and sorrows",[70] and "will never manage to avert harm".[71] One ought to contemplate the reality of man's social condition to discover its sheer hopelessness and to find oneself utterly alienated and estranged.

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[67] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 28.
[68] *Nafs*, 141–6; cf. p. 124 *supra*.
[69] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 19.
[70] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 22.
[71] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 25.

Social Contract

Had the purpose of the second section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* been to present a comprehensive account of socio-political motivation, we would have judged the conclusion (that the agent's socio-political involvement is based completely on a calculation that takes into account only his *immediate* interests) as fairly crude. What it presents, rather, is a view of human social nature at its most basic and indications as to how this view may be developed into the foundation for a full-fledged socio-political theory. Thus, the argument that individuals may cooperate for a non-personal cause each out of sheer self-interest may become a ground for a more sophisticated utilitarianism. It will do justice to al-Rāzī to append the above examination of his notion of human nature with an outline of what elements could be found in his *kalām* works of a fuller socio-political theory.[72]

Calculations of self-interest may yield more complex conclusions, whereby the interests of the social agent are often not gained in any immediate way. We saw above that al-Rāzī presents a theory of consent in order to explain both moral norms and the sense of moral obligation in human beings.[73] The sheer brutality and insecurity of the original, unchecked state of human association, as described in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, will drive individuals to the conclusion that adhering to a set of norms will define the framework to realising a state of security to each individual. Their primary motive will be prudential, since each individual's life, freedom, wellbeing, property and interests will be at risk from being undermined by others, which is a risk that even the opportunity to gain at the expense of others will not make worthwhile. According to al-Rāzī, reason is generally more inclined to prudence than to the pursuit of pleasure.

People thus consent to a normative convention, the conventionality of which is then forgotten by time, as it transforms into objectified moral truth and as people start treating these norms as *a priori* truths. In such a convention, each individual will accept, e.g., that wrongdoing as such is universally bad, whether done against him by others or against others by himself, and that he ought, therefore,

[72] See also: Ann Lambton, *State and Government*, 130–7, chapter on "Fakhr al-Dīn Rāzī: The Dissociation of Religious and Temporal Power", which examines his views in *Jāmiʿ al-ʿulūm* and relates them to his historical context.

[73] See p. 80 ff. *supra*.

to restrain his natural motive to limitlessly seek his own self-interest. Al-Rāzī indicates that every individual will realise that for such social order to endure effectively, all or most individuals, including himself, should adhere to such a convention.

However, on their own, such conventions cannot bring social order about. The institution and maintenance of order will require the combination of a legal code, based on a moral convention, with a recognised sovereign political power that will enforce it on people. Al-Rāzī writes in the *Maʿālim*:

> Installing an imām guarantees the prevention of harm that can only be prevented through it: therefore, it is obligatory (*wājib*).
>
> The first [premise] stems from our immediate (*ḍarūrī*) knowledge that if a mighty and potent (*ḍābiṭ*) leader appears in a country, the condition of that country will become closer to good order (*ṣalāḥ*) than if this leader did not exist.
>
> As regards the second [premise], since the prevention of harm from the self (*nafs*) is obligatory (*wājib*), whatever is necessary for the prevention of this harm will itself be obligatory.[74]

Elsewhere, he argues that both law and political authority are necessary for avoiding strife and disorder. The best form of law for serving this end will be a revealed law (*sharīʿa*) that warns wrongdoers of afterlife punishment, which will form a deterrent for both the mob (*awbāsh*), who will not be completely deterred by judging bloodshed and anarchy (*harj wa-marj*) to be morally bad (on prudential grounds), and the ruler, who will be inclined naturally to oppression. This explains the *ḥadīth*, "Islam and political power (*sulṭān*) are twin brothers".[75]

The appointment of a powerful despot will constitute a lesser evil for each individual than the state of lawlessness, and is thus prudentially necessary. Therefore, individuals will consent to making a compromise for the sake of the advantage of overall security, by accepting the authority of a powerful sovereign. In the *Arbaʿīn*, al-Rāzī writes:

> If it is said: "As there are such advantages in the appointment of this leader (*raʾīs*), there are also a variety of disadvantages: e.g. [1] if

[74] *Maʿālim*, 134. Cf. *Muḥaṣṣal*, 574; *Arbaʿīn*, 427–8; *Khamsūn*, 70–1.

[75] *Tafsīr*, 6, 205; 17, 20–1. The *ḥadīth* is recorded by al-Hindī, *Kanz al-ʿummāl*, 6, 4–5.

[subjects] refuse to obey him, corruption will increase;[76] [2] he may become despotic and oppress them; and [3] he may increase taxation[77] to strengthen his leadership; so he resorts to extracting money from the weak and poor."—we will say: There is no doubt that such wrongs will occur. Yet every rational person will know that if the disadvantages produced from the non-existence of the obeyed leader are compared to the disadvantages produced from his existence, they will be much greater. When we find such a dichotomy, consideration should be given to [the question of which option is] preponderant; for the omission of a greater good for the sake of a lesser evil is a great evil.[78]

The question of whether the establishment of the imāmate is necessary or not was debated from an early stage in Islamic history. The Khawārij maintained that it is never obligatory, whereas the Muʿtazilī Abū Bakr al-Aṣamm (d. 225/840) reportedly argued that only at times of strife does it become obligatory to appoint an imām for the sake of imposing order. The common Twelver Shīʿī view is that God is morally obligated to establish the imāmate for the sake of human advantage.[79] According to the common Sunni view, also held by most Muʿtazila and the Zaydīs, the establishment of the imāmate is made obligatory on people by Legal evidence only, normally consensus. Al-Rāzī accepts this view in his early *kalām* works.[80]

Yet others were of the view that the establishment of the imāmate is known to be obligatory on humans by unaided reason: al-Rāzī names some Muʿtazilīs, viz. al-Jāḥiẓ, Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Khayyāṭ (d. *ca.* 300/913), Abū l-Qāsim al-Kaʿbī, Abū l-Ḥusayn al-Baṣrī and his followers.[81] These theologians base the obligatoriness of establish-

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[76] This may imply that when such disobedience occurs, oppression and civil war may follow.

[77] Reading '*kharāj*' instead of '*ḥaraj*'. Cf. paraphrase from the *Arbaʿīn* in Ibn ʿArafa, *Mukhtaṣar*, 192.

[78] *Arbaʿīn*, 428; cf. *Jāmiʿ*, 218. Since 'good' and 'evil' in the statement, 'The omission of a greater good for the sake of a lesser evil is a great evil', should, in my opinion, be understood in terms of benefit and harm, his use of this statement in this context will not contradict al-Rāzī's rejection of the original, Neoplatonic sense thereof (cf. p. 162–3 *supra*).

[79] See al-Rāzī's refutation of al-Sharīf al-Murtaḍā in this regard (*Nihāya*, fol. 291b–295b; *Arbaʿīn*, 428–33; *Maʿālim*, 135; cf. al-Murtaḍā, *Dhakhīra*, 409 ff.).

[80] *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 418–20; *Nihāya*, fol. 290a–291b. Cf. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 20, 16 ff.

[81] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 574; *Arbaʿīn*, 426–7; *Barāhīn*, 2, 199. Cf. al-Jāḥiẓ, *Istiḥqāq*, 194–7; Lambton, *State*, 58 ff. I have not found any reference to this view by al-Khayyāṭ or

ing the imāmate and their justification of political authority on the prudential necessity of having a powerful ruler who is capable of enforcing social order.

Al-Ghazālī, too, adheres to a comparable position in the *Iqtiṣād*, though with a crucial difference.[82] He argues that one of the objectives (*maqṣūd*) of the Lawgiver is the preservation of the 'order of religion' (*niẓām al-dīn*). However, this is possible only by the establishment of the 'order of the world' (*niẓām al-dunyā*), which is achievable by the instalment of a recognised ruler. Therefore, the instalment of such a ruler is "a religious necessity" (*min ḍarūriyyāt al-sharʿ*). As an application of the principle of 'unsupported interest' (*maṣlaḥa mursala*), this line of argument relies ultimately on evidence from scripture.

By contrast, al-Rāzī bases his doctrine of the necessity of the imāmate, not on an obligation to serve the objectives of Revealed Law, but on purely prudential necessity—a stance that is yet another expression of his core normative consequentialism. He seems to draw on these earlier Muʿtazilī sources (especially, one presumes, Abū l-Ḥusayn and his school) in arguing for the necessity of political authority. Yet, in contrast to al-Jāḥiẓ, al-Rāzī's argument emphasises the individual's concern for his own safety and interests, rather than public wellbeing, as the immediate ground for obligation.

Al-Rāzī's 'Hobbesian' political theory contrasts sharply with al-Fārābī's utopian optimism, according to which humans associate primarily to gain various perfections, and only secondarily to protect themselves from the evils of the asocial state. Al-Fārābī states that human innate nature (*fiṭra*) motivates man to interact and co-operate socially, so as to perfect himself and the conditions of his being, with the aim of attaining happiness. It is unnatural for humans to be inclined to strife (*taghālub*).[83]

By contrast, Ibn Sīnā sees the purpose of the polity to be the establishment of social order and the maintenance of a basic degree of human wellbeing.[84] Hence, the goal (of the elite few) of attaining

al-Kaʿbī in a source earlier than al-Rāzī (Josef van Ess cites this view by al-Khayyāṭ from a source that paraphrases al-Rāzī's *Arbaʿīn*; see 'Khayyāṭ' in *EI²*, 1163; Ibn ʿArafa, *Mukhtaṣar*, 190).

[82] Al-Ghazālī, *Iqtiṣād*, 234–7; cf. Lambton, *State*, 110 ff.

[83] Al-Fārābī, *Ārā'*, 117 ff.

[84] Ibn Sīnā, *Shifā'*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 441–55; Miriam Galston, "Realism and Idealism", esp. 568.

happiness is confined to the private realm, and is not to be pursued by the art of politics. Government is necessary to realise justice and security, since people are naturally inclined to "consider just what others owe them, and unjust what they owe others". Therefore, divine providence will necessarily provide circumstances conducive to establishing government, most importantly by sending prophets. Galston writes that, in contrast to al-Fārābī's political philosophy, for Ibn Sīnā, "the virtuous individual replaces the virtuous city as the highest concern of practical philosophy and, concomitantly, the just city (*al-madīnah al-ʿādilah*) replaces the virtuous city as the ultimate goal of political science".[85]

Al-Rāzī moves further away from al-Fārābī's political optimism. As he states in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, the establishment of just government is so rare that it is almost an impossible and irrational pursuit; even if established, it will be short-lived. Political pursuit should aim, not at the realisation of human happiness or wellbeing, but at securing the most fundamental necessities for human existence, viz. a degree of security, law and order.

Ibn Sīnā maintains (generally following al-Fārābī) that the polity is established by divine providence, through the vehicle of prophecy. A 'contract of the polity' (*ʿaqd al-madīna*), to which people should consent, is then introduced, as a final stage in the establishment of the polity, to define its general principles and structure, and the rights and duties of each of its political strata.[86] By contrast, according to al-Rāzī, the political contract itself establishes the polity and is the most essential aspect thereof. It does not merely affirm a previous political process (whether initiated by prophecy or innate human nature), but is intended to radically alter the previous state. It represents reason curbing human nature.

The centrality given to the social contract appears in the view that the only ground, or 'cause', for the establishment of the imāmate (*sabab ḥuṣūl al-imāma*) is the 'contract of pledging allegiance' (*ʿaqd al-bayʿa*), which, al-Rāzī writes, is the view of Sunnis and Muʿtazilīs, rather than designation (*naṣṣ*), or characteristics pertaining to the person of the imām, such as lineage, according to Imāmīs.[87] However,

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[85] M. Galston, "Realism and idealism", 564.
[86] Ibn Sīnā, *Shifāʾ*, *Ilāhiyyāt*, 2, 447.
[87] *Arbaʿīn*, 437–8. On *ʿaqd al-bayʿa*, see e.g. ʿAbd al-Jabbār, *Mughnī*, 20, 251 ff.

following the common Sunni position,[88] al-Rāzī maintains that the pledge of allegiance requires the satisfaction of certain conditions (*sharṭ*), including character traits, in the prospective imām, which will qualify him to fulfil the duties of leadership. Nine attributes are listed in *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*: religious knowledge, practical wisdom and competence in administration and war, bravery, justice, maleness, free status, puberty, reason, and membership of the Quraysh tribe.[89] One who meets the conditions and is given the pledge of allegiance becomes the legitimate imām, even though he might not be the best living person for the position. Responding to the argument that a lesser person (*mafḍūl*) should never become a leader when someone with superior qualities (*fāḍil*) can be found, al-Rāzī writes:

> If the lesser person has the qualities of leadership, but is inferior in these virtues to another, and if we know that were leadership to be bestowed on another who is superior, unrest and disorder would result, whereas if it is bestowed on the inferior person, the social condition will become orderly and the public good will be guaranteed, then reason will judge that leadership ought to be bestowed on that lesser person. For the purpose of installing the imām is to preserve the public good. Therefore, if the preservation of the public good is realised only by bestowing leadership to the lesser person, then that will be necessary.[90]

The conditions of leadership are thus not absolute, but are means to an end. Al-Rāzī also argues that while the ascetic (*nāsik*) is ultimately the most virtuous person, neither he nor the jurist (*faqīh*) will be able to rule better than the political expert (*sāyis*), who is inferior in virtue to both of them.[91]

Epistemological Pessimism

The third section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* concerns intellectual pleasure, which, in contrast to sensory and imaginative pleasures, al-Rāzī associates with the human good. However, if his expression of pessimism

[88] Al-Ījī (*Mawāqif*, 8, 349) writes that this is the view of the majority (*jumhūr*).
[89] *Nihāyat*, fol. 295b–269a; fol. 301a–302b (quoted in Ibn ʿArafa, *Mukhtaṣar*, 193–4); cf. *Uṣūl al-dīn*, fol. 437–8.
[90] *Arbaʿīn*, 460; cf. *Jāmiʿ*, 205.
[91] *Nihāya*, fol. 302b–303b.

in this work with respect to human sensory activity is not out of the ordinary, and if his pessimism with respect to social association is highly unusual, the pessimism he expresses here in relation to intellectual activity is downright surprising. Al-Rāzī, of course, has a reputation for being an exceedingly confident rationalist, which indeed he lives up to in the absolute majority of his works.

Scepticism in Dhamm al-ladhdhāt

He begins the section by maintaining that intellectual pleasure is associated with the pursuit of the rational (*ʿaqlī*) sciences, to the exclusion of positive (*waḍʿī*) sciences, which are practiced for their utility in serving the physical dimension of human existence, and are thus inferior. Rational sciences either serve other sciences, such as logic, or have ends of their own. The latter are of four types, which concern: *(a)* knowing God, *(b)* knowing spiritual entities (*rūḥāniyyāt*), *(c)* knowing the higher world, and *(d)* knowing the lower world.

With respect to the highest of these sciences, viz. theology, al-Rāzī writes:

> Yet, who has reached the threshold of that lofty presence! And who has smelled the aroma of that sacred eminence! Indeed, the yield of all minds is but presumptions (*ẓann*) and conjectures (*ḥisbān*), and the culmination of this pursuit is but estimations (*wahm*) and imaginations (*khayāl*)![92]

With this sceptical note, which is then supported by several arguments, the tone is set for the rest of this third section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*. Particularly noteworthy is al-Rāzī's use of the expression '*ḥisbān*', which is often associated with sceptics, the *ḥisbāniyya*.[93]

The first argument is as follows. A demonstration is apodictic only if it has apodictic premises and valid syllogistic form. If the premises are apodictic propositions, they will be either immediately apodictic (*yaqīnī ibtidā'an*), i.e. self-evident, or deduced ultimately from premises that are themselves immediately apodictic, through one or more stages

[92] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 32.

[93] On the *ḥisbāniyya*, see van Ess, "Skepticism in Islamic Religious Thought", 1; 15, n. 3. Ibn ʿAbd Rabbih (*Al-ʿIqd al-farīd*, 2, 407) relates that one of the *ḥisbāniyya* summarised his persuasion by stating that "all things are [conceived] through mere phantasm (*tawahhum*) and conjecture (*ḥisbān*)." Al-Rāzī, too, makes use of the expression '*wahm*' here.

of reasoning. In either case, the proposition should be subject to the agreement of all rational people. The same should be true of the form of the proof. Therefore, if a proof has both apodictic premises and a valid syllogistic form, there should be no disagreement on its truth. However, al-Rāzī adds:

> Had so-called 'demonstrations' been in themselves real demonstrations, anyone who hears and comprehends them should accept them and, first of all, should not reject them. However, since we observe that what one disputant calls 'demonstration', another disputant will hear it, understand it, but will then reach not even a weak presumption by it, we will realise that these things are not in themselves demonstrations. Rather, they are weak premises to which partisanship and sentiment are combined. Therefore, someone will claim that [his argument] is a demonstration, although in itself it is not so.[94]

The second and third arguments reach a similar conclusion. Al-Rāzī argues that when two arguments lead to two opposing conclusions, at least one will, necessarily, be false. This will be due to at least one false premise in the argument, which someone will judge to be self-evident.

> This indicates that the mind may judge the truth of a fallacy to be immediately apodictic. This being the case, the mind's pronouncements as regards self-evident statements will become inadmissible. Therefore, all proofs will be vitiated (*tafsudu jamīʿ al-dalāʾil*).[95]

Al-Rāzī gives the specific examples of two debates, in which each side claims to produce conclusive evidence for their position: the theological debate on anthropomorphism (*tashbīh*) and the reductionism of divine attributes (*taʿṭīl*); and the debate on the nature of matter between atomists and hylomorphists. Al-Rāzī states that the arguments for each of the two opposing positions in the latter debate are very convincing and based on supposedly self-evident premises. The conflict seems irresolvable; for though each position, taken separately, appears rational, to accept two mutually-exclusive positions will be completely irrational.[96]

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[94] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 33.

[95] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 34.

[96] Al-Rāzī genuinely found the debate on atomism and hylomorphism highly problematic. In the *Mabāḥith* (2, 11–38), he supports hylomorphism and refutes atomist physics, including the fallacies (*shubha*) and doubts (*shakk*) that its supporters direct against hylomorphism. At a later stage, he seems undecided and suspends

These three arguments highlight the view that the mind is able to judge some false opinions as constituting apodictic knowledge, which casts doubt on the very notion and possibility of certainty as such. If we can trust neither immediate nor discursive knowledge, we will be unable to affirm any knowledge at all: "Reason will be undermined".[97] The sceptical mode that underlies these first three arguments invokes disagreement (*taʿāruḍ*) among views taken by various parties, especially philosophers and theologians, pointing to the poor 'track record' of reason in the history of ideas.[98]

Al-Rāzī's fourth argument is taken from the 'sophists', and is one that he cites and rejects in earlier works.[99] It goes as follows:

> If we reflect, contemplate and investigate, and if following this reflection a conviction arises, then our knowledge that this conviction constitutes knowledge cannot be immediate (*ḍarūrī*); for truth frequently turns out to be contrary to it. If it is [said to be] discursive (*naẓarī*), it will need another proof; and infinite regress (*tasalsul*) will follow, which is absurd.[100]

Following from the conclusions of the previous argument, this sceptical argument asks for a particular criterion that will enable us to overcome this general doubt, and to distinguish some of our opinions as constituting certain knowledge, rather than mere beliefs. However, any criterion will in turn require further criteria to justify it, which will lead to infinite regress.

Both sceptical modes, that of interminable disagreement and that of the infinite regress of proofs, have a long history before and after al-Rāzī, and are both referred to by Sextus Empiricus as being the two most basic sceptical strategies.[101] Al-Rāzī appears here to arrive

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judgement (*Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 226a; also fol. 216b–226a). He later adopts atomist physics and refutes hylomorphism (e.g. *Muḥaṣṣal*, 268 ff.; *Arbaʿīn*, 3–17), apparently dedicating a work to this subject (*Risālat ithbāt al-jawhar al-fard*, mentioned in *Arbaʿīn*, 264; cf. al-Zarkān, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, 70).

[97] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 35.

[98] This is reminiscent of the notion of 'the equipollence of opposing proofs' (*takāfuʾ al-adilla*) (on this, see van Ess, "Skepticism", 7). In this context, al-Rāzī does not seem to use the latter notion, which implies the affirmation of equivalence—something that, as we will see, he may prefer to avoid.

[99] *Nihāya*, fol. 13a; fol. 16a; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 83b; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 119; *Maʿālim*, 21–2; *Khalq*, fol. 4a.

[100] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 36.

[101] Sextus Empiricus, *Outlines of Scepticism*, 1.178-79. Cf. Jonathan Barnes, "Some Ways of Scepticism", 206–10.

at global scepticism, whereby people only have beliefs, never knowledge, which is defined in apodictic terms.

Having presented these four 'general' arguments, al-Rāzī supports his sceptical stance with a 'specific' argument concerning actual controversies among the main metaphysical and theological worldviews. He outlines the following:

1. Atheistic views deny the existence of a producer for the physical world, but explain its existence in one of three ways:
   (a) Physical objects in this world are necessary in themselves.
   (b) Their existence is preponderant to their non-existence.
   (c) They are temporally originated. But temporally originated things do not require a cause.
2. Some maintain that there is an essentially necessitating First Cause. They adhere to one of two possible positions:
   (a) The First Cause produces one effect. (Al-Rāzī specifies most of the *falāsifa*).
   (b) The First Cause may produce more than one effect.
3. Some maintain that the Creator has choice and considers human advantage in His acts. They then hold one of the following views with respect to the problem of evil:
   (a) Two gods exist: a good one, who produces all good, and an evil one, who produces all evil. (Dualists).
   (b) The world came into being when the Soul, out of its ignorance, attached itself to matter. All good in the world is from God, and all evil is from the Soul's ignorance. (Abū Bakr al-Rāzī).
   (c) The suffering endured in this world is not bad, since God will compensate humans for it. (Muʿtazilīs).
   (d) The world is predominantly good, and is the best possible world. Not to have created it would have been a great evil. (Al-Ghazālī?)
4. Some maintain that the Creator is a voluntary agent, who does not consider human advantage in His acts. He sometimes delivers benefits to humans, sometimes harms. They fall under two groups:
   (a) Some deny prophecy, the afterlife and religious obligation.
   (b) Some affirm prophecy and religious obligation.[102]

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[102] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 37–9.

If al-Rāzī were to remain consistent with the global scepticism implied in his previous arguments, he would argue for the inability to demonstrate the truth of any of these positions. This would inevitably lead to an extreme agnosticism, whereby even the existence of a creator for this world is not affirmed. Metaphysical enquiry would be futile.

Yet al-Rāzī immediately begins to assess the "praiseworthy and blameworthy aspects" of each position. He states that the denial of the existence of the Producer is "the most heinous of all positions, and the furthest among them from reason and good sense"; for the need of existent things for an effecter may be proved through the argument from the contingence of physical objects. After briefly discussing these premises, al-Rāzī notes that they involve complex and obscure discussions, referring the reader to his philosophical works, particularly the *Maṭālib*.[103]

However, for the second, third and fourth main stances, we are not given final conclusions, but are simply referred to the *Maṭālib*.[104] He even states that the last position (4b), which he normally accepts, has its obscurities and problems. Hence, al-Rāzī rejects atheistic positions, but points out that there are many confusions and complications to be found in the investigations of other positions, though his references to his discussions in the *Maṭālib* seem to suggest that some sort of assessment can be made in relation to some or all of them. He concludes:

> When you have grasped these lofty stations and fine, elevated preambles, and discerned what intricate problems and obscure objections that each involves, you will realise that [attaining] certain knowledge is difficult, and that conclusiveness in each topic, such that it becomes free from [propensity for further] contention and confusion, is very rare. As such, the yearning is severe, the privation prevalent, the instrument feeble, and the goal insuperable![105]

Certainty may thus be attainable, yet rarely and with 'great difficulty'. In relation to the almost absolute and global scepticism of the first four arguments in this section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, the scepticism expressed here appears qualified and restricted. Al-Rāzī then writes, in conclusion to *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*:

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[103] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 40; cf. *Maṭālib*, 1, 74–90.
[104] Cf. *Maṭālib*, 3, 77–100; 4, 373–97.
[105] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 42.

If you recognise these conditions, sensory pleasures will become vile, and imaginative pleasures will become abject. As for intellectual pleasures, there will be no way to attain them, approach them or rely on them. For these reasons we say: Would that we had remained in primordial non-existence! Would that we had never seen this world! And would that the soul had never become attached to this body! On this theme I say,

Entanglement, the acme of minds' pursuit,[106]
Most human endeavour is but straying;
Our souls are estranged from our bodies,
The yield of our world, but harms and bane;
All we've gained from a lifelong research,
Is but collecting quotations and sayings;
Many a man and dynasty have we seen,
That all quickly perished and expired;
Many a mountaintop was surmounted,
By men, who perished, yet the mountains remain.[107]

Know that after deep penetration into these defiles, and delving deeply (*ta'ammuq*) in exploring the secrets of these matters, I have found the most correct and advantageous [method] (*al-aṣwab al-aṣlaḥ*) in this regard to be the method of the holy Qur'ān (*ṭarīqat al-Qur'ān*), the noble Furqān, which is the abandonment of delving deeply, and of inferring the existence of the Lord of the Worlds from the divisions of bodies in the heavens and the earth, and then proclaiming the greatness [of God] to the maximum extent (*al-mubālagha fī l-ta'ẓīm*), without wading into details.

Thus, I read, on deanthropomorphism (*tanzīh*), [God's] saying, "God is the Self-sufficient and you are the needy",[108] His saying, "Naught is as His likeness",[109] and His saying, "Say, He is God, the One".[110] And I read, on the affirmation [of divine attributes] (*ithbāt*), "The

[106] *Nihāyat aqdām al-'uqūl 'iqāl.* Interestingly, this line echoes two *kalām* titles—al-Rāzī's own *Nihāyat al-'uqūl*, and al-Shahrastānī's *Nihāyat al-aqdām*—an apparently symbolic pun.

[107] Meter: *ṭawīl.* Cf. the following Persian quatrain attributed to him (quoted in translation by Seyyed H. Nasr, "Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī", 653, without reference):

My heart was never deprived of science,
There is little of the mysteries that I did not understand.
For seventy-two years I thought night and day,
Yet I came to know that nothing is to be known.

One problem in these lines, however, is that al-Rāzī died at the age of sixty-two.

[108] Qur. 47:38.

[109] Qur. 42:11.

[110] Qur. 112:1.

> Beneficent is established on the Throne",[111] His saying, "They fear their Lord above them",[112] and His saying, "Unto Him good words ascend".[113] And I read, on that all is from God, His saying, "Say, all is from God",[114] and, on exalting Him above what is inappropriate, His saying, "Whatever of good befalls you, it is from God; and whatever of ill befalls you, it is from thyself".[115] And so forth, by this same rule (*qānūn*).
>
> I say, from the depth of my heart, and the inmost of my soul: I confirm that all that is most perfect, most virtuous, greatest and most glorious pertains to You, and that You are exalted above all that involves defect or imperfection. I confirm that my mind and comprehension fall short of attaining the true reality of a single atom of the atoms of Your creatures. And I confirm that I have failed to praise You with what befits You. For eulogies are of either of two types; they either expound attributes of majesty (*jalāl*), which is exalting God above what is inappropriate, or expound attributes of beneficence (*ikrām*), which is attributing to God His being the creator of this world. Yet the first involves ungraciousness in some respects, for if a man tells a king, "You are not blind, deaf, or leprous", he will deserve reprimand and confinement. As for the second, it involves ungraciousness; for all the perfections of creatures are imperfections in relation to the Creator's perfection; hence, expounding the Creator's perfection using relative attributes that relate [Him] to creatures involves ungraciousness.
>
> O, Lord of might! I admit that I am incapable of praising You except in either of these two ways! And I admit that neither befit Your majesty and might. Yet I am as though excusable; for I know naught but this, and I am unable to find anything superior to it![116]

The beginning of this statement is by far the most explicitly pessimistic statement to be found anywhere in al-Rāzī's writings, and is among the most extreme expressions of pessimism that can be found in medieval Arabic prose. It remains surprising even as a conclusion to the pessimistic trend throughout *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*. And indeed, the interest of this statement, which clearly expresses a genuine sentiment and sincere conviction of its author in one of his latest texts, made parts of it among the most frequently quoted pieces of his writings.

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[111] Qur. 20:5.
[112] Qur. 16:50.
[113] Qur. 35:10.
[114] Qur. 4:78.
[115] Qur. 4:79.
[116] *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 42–3.

Now, the scepticism presented in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* will initially appear inconsistent. The first four 'general' arguments imply a sweeping, global scepticism, yet they are followed by an expression of a significantly milder and more restricted scepticism. The latter stance does not exclude the possibility of arriving at knowledge in rational theology, but considers it to be rarer and much more difficult than normally believed to be the case. However, these two trends may not be as contradictory as they seem. The first four arguments can be seen to represent (rather sketchy) attacks on the notion of certain knowledge, but do not necessarily lead to a rejection of the assertion of more or less justified belief. Despite al-Rāzī's disillusionment with philosophical and theological pursuit, he does not conclude that it is entirely futile and that it calls for the total suspension of judgement (*tawaqquf*). Indeed, his contention that the 'way of the Qur'ān' is superior indicates that the difference is one of degree.

Scepticism in the Maṭālib

We may test the above interpretation of the scepticism expressed in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* by considering relevant discussions in the *Maṭālib*, most importantly its epistemological introduction, written shortly before *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*.[117] The book opens with a section entitled "On explaining how this science [i.e. theology (*al-ʿilm al-ilāhī, uthūlūjyā*)] is the best of all sciences absolutely", which clearly expresses a favourable view of philosophical theology—hardly a sign of scepticism.

The following section, however, is entitled "On whether there is a way for human minds to attain certainty (*al-jazm wa-l-yaqīn*) in this science, or whether it suffices with respect to some of its topics and questions to accept what is most probable and apt (*al-awlā wa-l-akhlaq*)." Al-Rāzī here argues that certain knowledge in many (rather than 'some') important theological questions is unattainable, and that one should be content with the most probable conclusions in them. He advances several arguments for this stance.

The first line of argument is that our knowledge of some items that should be among the most evident and immediate objects of knowledge to our minds is highly dubious and problematic. We may

[117] *Maṭālib*, 1, 37–64.

know of them (*ʿilm*), but we cannot properly understand and conceive them (*maʿrifa*).[118] It follows that our knowledge of less evident items, including divine nature, must be much more obscure and problematic, and that our minds may only attain probable belief in such cases, never certain knowledge. Al-Rāzī considers this argument to be based on an induction from numerous particular cases, of which he provides four illustrative examples: knowledge of the nature of the self, time, space and the principles of geometry.[119]

He first argues that the knowledge that is supposed to be the clearest and most immediate knowledge to the individual is that of the nature of his own self. Presumably, this follows from his view that one knows immediately that his self exists. Yet this knowledge is of the utmost obscurity and uncertainty; for many conflicting theories on the nature of man and the human soul have been advanced, involving complicated discussions, which leave the mind bewildered.[120] So, how could it be claimed that one is able to attain certain knowledge of things that are epistemically remote? Moreover, a theory of knowledge should rely on a notion of the nature of the self, which is the knower. If the nature of the knower is unknown with certainty, then the notion and integrity of knowledge itself will come into question. One is reminded here of the common view, which al-Rāzī expresses frequently, that knowing God presupposes knowing oneself.[121] The same argument is advanced in *Asrār al-tanzīl*, followed by two lines of Persian poetry from Sanāʾī (d. *ca.* 548/1152):

> O thou, who art incompetent to know thine own nature, how wilt thou ever know God? Since thou art incapable of knowing thyself, how wilt thou become a knower of the Omnipotent?[122]

Al-Rāzī then underscores the interminable controversies on the nature of time, space and matter. He concludes, with reference to the last controversy, which is already cited in *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*:

> Whoever examines that problem and realises the strength of each side's evidence will know that the mind will necessarily culminate in

[118] On this distinction between *ʿilm* and *maʿrifa*, cf. al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, '*Maʿrifa*'; 'Maʿrifa', *EI*².

[119] *Maṭālib*, 1, 41–6.

[120] Cf. p. 116–7 *supra*.

[121] E.g. *Risāla fī l-nafs*, fol. 2a.

[122] *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 141–2; cf. Sanāʾī, *Ḥadīqat al-ḥaqīqa*, 63; M. Stephenson's translation, 4.

perplexity and bewilderment and in [having to] accept what is probable and apt.

This induction shows that, in its attempt to understand the most evident objects of knowledge, the mind will culminate in utter perplexity and bewilderment (*maḥḍ al-ḥayra wa-l-dahsha*) and will have to accept what is probable and apt. So how do you reckon the mind will fare when it [attempts] to ascend to the gates of God's greatness, and when it tries to delve into investigations of the nature of His [attributes]![123]

Another example that al-Rāzī then provides is from geometry, which is seen as one of the most exact and rigorous rational disciplines. Although Euclid, according to al-Rāzī, contends that an infinite number of regular polygons may be conceived, he was only able to actually demonstrate the constructability (i.e. by the means of compass and ruler only) of five: the equilateral triangle, the square, the pentagon, the hexagon, and the pentadecagon (the polygon of fifteen sides).[124] Demonstrations of the constructability of two more, the heptagon and the nonagon, were later attempted by specialists in conics, but the constructability of other regular polygons remained unproven.[125] This shows, al-Rāzī argues, that reason has a severe handicap in understanding some of the most tangible, basic and presumably rational aspects of the nature of this physical being. It is likely to have an even greater handicap in understanding divine nature.[126]

Al-Rāzī also advances the following main argument. The conceptions (*taṣawwur*) that may be perceived by reason, estimation (*wahm*) and imagination are of four types: *(a)* essences perceived through the five physical senses; *(b)* essences perceived internally and immediately in the self, such as pain, pleasure, hunger, joy and anger; *(c)* essences that are perceived by the mind innately, such as conceptions of existence, non-existence, oneness, multiplicity, necessity, possibility and impossibility; and *(d)* essences that reason and imagination combine (*rakkaba*) from the simple essences of the three previous types. Since it will be impossible for reason and imagination to perceive anything other than these types, al-Rāzī concludes elsewhere that human

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123 *Maṭālib*, 1, 44; cf. *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 142.

124 I am grateful to Dr Sonja Brentjes for informing me that in fact Euclid does not make the claim that an infinite number of regular polygons may be conceived.

125 Cf. Jan Hogendijk, "Greek and Arabic Constructions of the Regular Heptagon".

126 *Maṭālib*, 1, 44–6.

conceptions are all self-evident (*badīhī*), none are acquired (*kasbī*, *muktasab*).[127] Therefore, if one is to affirm the statement, "There does not exist a partner for God", one needs to have a conception of 'partner for God'. He will have a conception of 'partner' in some contexts and a general conception of 'divinity' (*al-ilāh*). So he will be able to combine both "to conceive the meaning of 'partner for God'," and to conclude that "it is inconceivable for a thing to exist that the relation of which to God is similar to the relation of my partner to me".[128]

Al-Rāzī argues that the range of possible conceptions that the mind may perceive restricts the range of possible assertions (*taṣdīq*) that it will be able to make. This recalls his usual notion of 'assertion' as consisting of a combination of conceptions with a judgement (*ḥukm*) in either affirmation or negation.[129] Without having their constituent conceptions in mind, true and meaningful statements of assertion cannot be made.[130] In other words, they would be nonsensical.

In the process of intellectual reflection (*naẓar*), or thought (*fikr*), the mind will only acquire assertions on the basis of other assertions.[131] When the mind considers problems of a high epistemic order, such as those relating to divine nature, it will still use the same above types of conception in its deductions. Yet, since divine nature is different in all respects from these conceptions, both simple and combined, it will be impossible to make statements of assertion that refer to it essentially.[132] This seems to render most statements on divine nature as effectively nonsensical. Al-Rāzī concludes:

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[127] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 81–4; *Arbaʿīn*, 478–9.

[128] *Maṭālib*, 1, 49–50.

[129] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 81; *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 1b–2a.

[130] Knowledge, it should be recalled, is defined as an apodictic statement of assertion that corresponds to reality, whereas non-apodictic statements may constitute beliefs, or presumptions, depending on the degree of conviction one has in them (*Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 155a).

[131] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 121; *Maʿālim*, 21.

[132] Al-Rāzī (*Lawāmiʿ*, 35) uses this same argument to refute a Muʿtazilī position on divine attributes:

> If we say: "His being knowing and powerful are two positive items, distinct from [His] essence," Abū Hāshim [al-Jubbāʾī] will say: "Being knowing (*ʿālimiyya*) and being powerful (*qādiriyya*) cannot be said to be existent or non-existent, knowable or unknowable." Most sensible men agree on that his saying is false.
>
> For, necessarily, every assertion has to be preceded by conception. So, if these two attributes are not conceived, it will not be possible to maintain that both are

> Minds fall short of knowing Him, and perceptions do not reach Him. Rather, the highest aim [for reason] is that if we perceive the meaning of 'perfection' and 'imperfection' in relation to ourselves, ... we will understand the meaning of 'perfection' and 'imperfection' as such. For the unconditional [conception] (*muṭlaq*) is part of the essence of the conditional (*muqayyad*) [conception]. In this way, the meaning of 'perfection' and 'imperfection' may be perceived. If we perceive this meaning, we may accept to affirm the designation 'perfect' with respect to [God], provided that we purge this designation of all concomitants associated to it when it applies to us.
>
> Most people will have only this much knowledge of [God's] majesty. With this explanation, it becomes clear that human minds come to achieve nothing but these general items of knowledge, which are affirmed only according to what is most probable and apt, but not in detail.[133]

The scepticism that al-Rāzī reaches in the *Maṭālib* finds expression in his numerous references to 'bewilderment and perplexity' (*al-ḥayra wa-l-dahsha*).[134] Though his sceptical stance, viewed within the history of ideas generally, will appear rather moderate, it is indeed a radical scepticism in the context of *kalām* and *falsafa*. In the wider Islamic context, it was generally seen that no less than knowledge, defined in terms of certainty (*qaṭʿ*, *yaqīn*), should be contented with in theological questions, to the exclusion of mere belief and presumption (*ẓann*), which contain an element of doubt (*shakk*, *shubha*).[135] Al-Tahānawī, for example, records the common view that doubt is a subspecies of ignorance (*jahl*).[136] Those who favoured a discursive approach did so with the conviction that it does provide certainty. Thus, in his earlier works, al-Rāzī writes, with reference to metaphysics, that "affirming what is most prob-

attributes of essence. Also, if an attribute is not conceived, it will not be possible to assert that it is not conceived. For our saying, "This is not conceived", is a proposition; and every proposition should be preceded by the understanding of its subject and predicate. Also, what is judged to be unknowable is not the essence, but an attribute; so this attribute is singled out and said to be not conceived—which is contradictory.

[133] *Maṭālib*, 1, 50–1.

[134] E.g. *Maṭālib*, 1, 42; 1, 44; 2, 98; 4, 368; 4, 426, where he almost classifies himself as one of *ahl al-ḥayra wa-l-dahsha*. Cf. A. Shihadeh, Review of İskenderoğlu, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*, 215.

[135] Cf. Franz Rosenthal, *Knowledge Triumphant*, 300 ff.; R. Frank, "Knowledge and *Taqlīd*", 43.

[136] Al-Tahānawī, *Kashshāf*, "*Shakk*".

able (*awlā*) is inapt in apodictic disciplines (*lā yalīqu bi-l-qaṭʿiyyāt*)".[137]

Therefore, in the Islamic context, sceptical outlooks that consider divine nature to be beyond the grasp of discursive reasoning normally lead to the total rejection of rational theology and metaphysics as futile. This will be followed by either a sceptical suspension of judgement (*tawaqquf*), or, more commonly, by the acceptance of an alternative epistemology, be it scriptural, esoteric, or traditional.[138]

However, these two outcomes are not logically necessary. For scepticism, it has been argued, may be characterised by two distinct features: a thesis, asserting the impossibility of knowledge, which can be either global or restricted to specific classes of knowledge; and a recommendation that one ought to suspend judgement. These two statements, the 'is' and the 'ought', are logically independent of each other, as the thesis is not sufficient to justify the recommendation.[139]

Now, in the *Maṭalib*, al-Rāzī goes against the current trend by putting forth a restricted sceptical thesis, yet without recommending an automatic suspension of judgement. He contends that although knowledge cannot be attained discursively with respect to many theological questions, theological reflection may still show that some non-apodictic theological statements are more justified and more plausible than others. When the mind is unable to attain apodictic knowledge in relation to a given theological problem, it may have reason to affirm, tentatively, the most probable, plausible, or apt (*awlā, akhlaq, ashbah*) belief (or conviction) that it can attain, while recognising its fallibility. This position, which al-Rāzī adopts at this late stage, explains the seeming contradiction in the third section of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, noted previously.

In the *Maṭālib*, one finds that this scepticism leads to a surprising expression of theological tolerance by a thinker who is notorious for his debating tenacity. Having found all rational and revealed evidence for the question of the pre-eternity of the world inconclusive, al-Rāzī writes:

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[137] *Mabāḥith*, 2, 482.

[138] In earlier works, al-Rāzī refutes these alternative approaches in favour of theological and metaphysical reflection (*Nihāya*, fol. 19b–22b; *Muḥaṣṣal*, 122; 126–7).

[139] Gisela Striker, *Sceptical Strategies*, 54; cf. Charlotte Stough, *Greek Skepticism*, 4.

> Now that these various positions have been summarised in this manner, and that the praiseworthy and blameworthy aspects of each have become evident, at this point those who are perplexed and bewildered (*aṣḥāb al-ḥayra wa-l-dahsha*) will say: These proofs are not clear and strong enough to dispel doubt (*shakk*), preclude excuses and enlighten the mind with their strength and vividness. Rather, each betrays a degree of obscurity. One who is merciful and magnanimous should excuse one who errs in such defiles.[140]

By contrast, al-Ghazālī, who emerges out of his brief phase of doubt with very firm certainties, declares the *falāsifa* to be unbelievers for maintaining that the world is pre-eternal. The attitude of tolerance on the basis of doubt, which al-Rāzī expresses here, was not uncommon in the discipline of *fiqh*; yet it was generally alien to earlier Islamic theology.

It goes well beyond the scope of the present study to convey how this sceptical stance affects al-Rāzī's treatment of specific theological and philosophical questions.[141] So does the examination of his extensive discussions in his earlier works of a wide variety of sceptical outlooks and arguments. We should also leave aside, in the present study which focuses on the ideas, the (probably worthwhile) attempt to speculate on al-Rāzī's circumstances or motives that may have contributed to his reaching this scepticism. Suffice it in the remainder of the present subsection to examine briefly the intellectual background to this particular sceptical stance (that in most cases in metaphysics, one may only reach probable belief, rather than certainty), which al-Rāzī adopts, to the extent permitted by the extant textual sources. While his exact influences cannot at this stage be pinpointed, relevant general trends in this background are identifiable.

The sceptical arguments he refutes in his earlier works, especially *Nihāyat al-ʿuqūl*, the *Mulakhkhaṣ* and the *Muḥaṣṣal*, mostly advocate the suspension of judgement, either in relation to knowledge as such, discursive reasoning generally, or discursive reasoning in metaphysics specifically. Yet one also finds cursory references to the contention that while certain knowledge in metaphysics is unattainable through discursive reasoning, some views may be accepted on account of being more plausible, probable, or apt than others. Therefore, instead of

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[140] *Maṭālib*, 4, 426. Cf. *Tafsīr*, 2, 52–3.

[141] On al-Rāzī's treatment of the question of the eternity of the world in the *Maṭālib*, as an example, see Muammer İskenderoğlu, *Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī*; also my review of this monograph.

suspending judgement in these occasions, one may affirm the most plausible view, while acknowledging that it is not certain, but probable (*muḥtamal*). For example, the following argument in the *Mulakhkhaṣ*, advanced by an imaginary sceptic against al-Rāzī, proposes this as an alternative to the trend of suspending judgement:

> In your present book, you suspend judgement (*tawaqquf*) on many questions, because of the opposition of proofs (*taʿāruḍ al-adilla*). This undermines [the notion of] immediate knowledge. For strong, opposed proofs will be constructed of premises. If the mind is certain about each premise and unable to undermine it in any way, though we know immediately that some are false (since it is inconceivable that contradictory premises are all true), then we will find that the mind makes certain and decisive judgement, without hesitation or probability (*iḥtimāl*), in relation to [a premise], despite it being false. Therefore, confidence in the decisive judgement of the mind will cease. Which will lead to undermining *a priori* knowledge.
>
> However, if the mind is able to undermine any of those premises, suspension of judgement will become untenable. One then ought to show that some of the premises of one side are probable (*muḥtamal*)—and the probable does not provide certainty—in which case there will be no need to suspend judgement with respect to it.[142]

We may discern a twofold inspiration for this alternative scepticism, which al-Rāzī adopts, viz. a metaphysical scepticism among some mathematicians, and a current which originates in ancient philosophical scepticism.

The metaphysical scepticism to be found among mathematicians finds expression in sceptical arguments that al-Rāzī uses in his later works, most notably his foregoing argument from proofs of the constructability of polygons. It also appears in arguments he cites in earlier works, such as the following sceptical argument from the certainties of mathematics, recorded in the *Mulakhkhaṣ* (which, at this early stage, al-Rāzī rejects). Statements like "1 is half of 2" constitute immediate knowledge. But philosophers use premises like "It is only with a preponderator that either the [existence or non-existence] of the contingent thing will preponderate", and "What applies to one thing applies equally to its like", which, they claim, constitute immediate and certain knowledge. It is clear, however, that these are not as evident as the proposition "1 is half of 2", which the mind will

[142] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 83b–84a.

be 'more certain' about. Yet there cannot be degrees of certainty, since the very notion of certainty excludes the slightest probability. Therefore, the premises that philosophers use are not certain.[143]

In the *Muḥaṣṣal* and the *Maḥṣūl*, al-Rāzī writes of a group of geometricians (*muhandisūn*) who accept the use of discursive reasoning only in arithmetic and geometry, but not in metaphysics, where the highest aim, they maintain, should be to attain probable belief, rather than certainty.[144] This reference has already been linked both to an account of a similar view expressed by some mathematicians, which is recorded in John Philoponos' Commentary on the *Isagoge*, and to a report of an early debate between mathematicians and *mutakallimūn*, recorded by al-Jāḥiẓ.[145] In the latter, arithmeticians and geometricians are said to argue that the way of *kalām* rests on opinion, conjecture, approximations and delusions, whereas true science is natural, immediate, and free from inexact interpretations and equivocations. Similarly, Ptolemy writes, in the then widely read *Almagest*, that of the three divisions of theoretical philosophy (viz. theology, physics and mathematics),

> ... the first two divisions of theoretical philosophy should rather be called guesswork than knowledge, theology because of its completely invisible and ungraspable nature, physics because of the unstable and unclear nature of matter; hence there is no hope that philosophers will ever be agreed about them; and that only mathematics can provide sure and unshakeable knowledge of its devotees, provided one approaches it rigorously.[146]

There can be little doubt that this sort of metaphysical scepticism, which rests on a contrast with the certainties that the rigour of mathematics provides, had a direct influence on al-Rāzī.[147]

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[143] *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 83a–b.

[144] *Muḥaṣṣal*, 122; cf. *Maḥṣūl*, 1/1, 207; 1/2, 444.

[145] Anton Heinen, "Mutakallimūn and Mathematicians", 65–72, esp. 72; Josef van Ess, *Die Erkenntnislehre des 'Aḍudaddin al-Īcī*, 274–6; al-Jāḥiẓ, *Ṣināʿa*, 57.

[146] Ptolemy, *Almagest*, 36. Cf. F. Jamil Ragep, "Freeing Astronomy from Philosophy", 58, which cites an unpublished manuscript of a work by Quṭb al-Dīn al-Shīrāzī (d. 710/1311), in which Ptolemy's above statement is echoed: "Astronomy is the noblest of the sciences. ... Its proofs are secure—being of number and geometry—about which there can be no doubt, unlike the proofs in physics and theology". I am grateful to Dr Sonja Brentjes for a very helpful discussion we had on this subject.

[147] This metaphysical scepticism had a parallel among physicians, who found certainty in empiricism to the exclusion of metaphysical speculation. Abū Ḥayyān

Indicating his other main inspiration for this type of scepticism, he notes in the *Mulakhkhaṣ* that he read somewhere that Aristotle maintained "that one cannot attain certainty in theological questions, and that the highest aim in them is to attain belief according to what is most apt and plausible".[148] In the introduction of the *Maṭālib*, he indicates that he also found this view attributed to certain ancient "eminent philosophers".[149] Aristotle does not seem to have expressed this view, but this epistemological stance was rather espoused by some ancient sceptics, including members of the New Academy. According to Carneades, a head of the Academy, one cannot attain certainty, but ought not to suspend judgement in all matters when 'plausible', or 'probable' positions may be reached. It remains unclear, however, how this trend in ancient scepticism reached al-Rāzī.[150]

In the context of Islamic philosophy and theology, his adoption of this sceptical stance appears to be unprecedented. Some discussion of this position continued after him; yet to what extent it had been

al-Tawḥīdī (*Imtāʿ*, 1, 38; cf. Roshdi Rashed, "Qūhī *vs.* Aristotle", 9) refers to the aversion that some contemporaries from both groups—physicians and mathematicians—had towards metaphysics: "This one studies illness and health, disease and medicine, and that one examines the sun and the moon. Yet none of them will have anything to say on soul, intellect or deity, as though these [subjects] were forbidden to them, or blameworthy among them."

It is possible that al-Rāzī, who wrote at least two major works on medicine, was inspired also by this metaphysical scepticism propounded by physicians, which he must have come across (although we have found no evidence in his works to confirm this influence). For instance, in *On the Doctrines of Hippocrates and Plato* (577–9), which al-Rāzī read (cf. *Nafs*, 74), Galen notes that whereas one finds many interminable disagreements among philosophers, disagreements among physicians are often resolved: "In philosophy it is not surprising that most disagreements have not been resolved, as the matters it deals with cannot be clearly judged by an empirical test, and therefore some say that the universe did not have a beginning, others that it had, and again some say that there is nothing outside surrounding it, others that there is something, and of the latter, some say that what surrounds it is a void that has no substance in it, others that it is surrounded by other universes numerous beyond calculation, so that their number reaches to infinity. Such disagreement cannot be settled by clear sense-perception. But the case is not the same when a disagreement arises among physicians about the benefit or harm of remedies applied to bodies; physicians, at least, can judge by empirical test which of them is helpful and which is harmful." (Cf. J. Barnes, "Some Ways of Scepticism", 206).

148 *Mulakhkhaṣ*, fol. 83b.

149 *Maṭālib*, 1, 41.

150 For sources on ancient sceptical influences on Islamic thought generally, see: D. Gutas, "Pre-Plotinian Philosophy", 4963.

influential on later Islamic thought remains to be seen.[151] It appears to have had a profound impact on Ibn Taymiyya's polemics, who often argues that the *falāsifa* and the *mutakallimūn* can only reach presumption, not certainty; yet, for him, one should never settle for less than the latter in theology.[152]

Epistemological Pessimism and Human Perfection

In the third section of the introduction to the *Maṭālib*, entitled "On whether this sacred knowledge may be attained by one or more methods (*ṭarīq*)", al-Rāzī contends that there are in fact two approaches to this knowledge. The first is the discursive, philosophical and theological approach, which was subject to his sceptical scrutiny in the preceding section. In this approach, one may prove the existence of God only by deduction from facts about created things.[153] This may yield indirect knowledge of God's existence, as we will conclude that created things require an external cause, without knowing the essence thereof. This limitation in the discursive mode of knowing God is underscored in another work, where al-Rāzī quotes Abū l-Barakāt al-Baghdādī as follows:

> The knower may know the thing essentially ... or ... non-essentially (*ma'rifa 'araḍiyya*). ... When we infer the existence of the Necessary Existent from the existence of contingent things, this will be a non-essential type of knowledge. For what is known of It will be that It is a particular essence whose nature is unknown. But we know two features of It, viz. the dependence of all else on It, and Its independence from all else. As for essential knowledge, we will not have it, ... neither of Its essence (since we do not know how Its essence is distinct), nor of aspects of Its essence (since It is one and non-composite; so Its essence does not consist of parts).[154]

The second path to this knowledge, al-Rāzī writes, is the method of spiritual discipline, which allows direct and supra-mundane knowledge of God. If one purifies his heart and perseveres in recollect-

[151] E.g. al-Ījī, *Mawāqif*, 1, 138–40.

[152] Ibn Taymiyya, *Bayān*, 1, 372; 2, 252; 2, 478; *Majmū'*, 9, 36; *Dar'*, 1, 159 (French trans. Yahya Michot, "Vanités intellectuelles", 607).

[153] *Maṭālib*, 1, 53–4. Al-Rāzī also rejects Ibn Sīnā's claim that his ontological argument for the existence of God does not rely on any empirical premises (cf. Ibn Sīnā, *Ishārāt*, 3, 36–52).

[154] *Lawāmi'*, 99; cf. al-Baghdādī, *Mu'tabar*, 3, 122 ff.

ing (*dhikr*) God, both inwardly and outwardly, his soul will witness, directly, divine illumination and knowledge. "These are stations that man will not fathom in detail (*ʿalā sabīl al-tafṣīl*) unless he attains them".[155] Certainty, in other words, may only be reached through the 'method of spiritual discipline' (*ṭarīqat al-taṣfiya wa-l-riyāḍa*), leading to spiritual perfection, rather than the discursive method, the 'method of reflection and inference' (*ṭarīqat al-naẓar wa-l-istidlāl*). Nonetheless, proficiency in both paths will allow one to critically assess the knowledge and stations that he arrives at, which will enable him to recognise pitfalls along the spiritual path, such as believing that he has arrived at the end of the path when experiencing very powerful and unfamiliar states and revelations.[156]

Al-Rāzī's metaphysical scepticism, as we saw, rests partly on the following line of reasoning, in relation to the epistemic limitations of man: (1) conceptions cannot be acquired; (2) the conceptions that humans ordinarily perceive fall into certain mundane types of essences; (3) the range of meaningful statements of assertion is determined by the range of their constituent perceived conceptions; (4) therefore, statements of assertion that humans can ordinarily make will be mundane and can refer to supra-mundane items only in a very general sense. Therefore, the inability to attain supra-mundane knowledge is not essential to the soul itself, but is due to an accidental limitation in its range of perception, which is determined by the nature of its association with the physical body. While the soul cannot attain supra-mundane knowledge discursively, it is, in principle, capable of direct supra-mundane perception, when its attachment to the body loosens. This is the only way for the soul to attain true theoretical perfection.

Al-Rāzī thus concludes that the method of spiritual discipline is the superior alternative to *kalām* and *falsafa*, and the solution to epistemological pessimism and utter despair. How then should we understand his numerous statements, in his later writings, that what he refers to as the 'method (*ṭarīqa*) of the Qurʾān' should be regarded as the superior alternative to *kalām* and *falsafa*? He constantly describes this method as one that involves both the abandonment of 'delving deeply' (*taʿammuq*) into theoretical complications and subtleties, and

[155] *Maṭālib*, 1, 54–5.
[156] *Maṭālib*, 1, 58–9; cf. *Tafsīr*, 21, 149–50.

proclaiming God's greatness 'to the maximum extent' (*al-mubālagha fī l-ta'ẓīm*). This finds expression in the above-quoted conclusion of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*,[157] as well as his last testimony (*Waṣiyya*), dictated at his sickbed shortly before his death:

> I tried the methods of *kalām* and *falsafa*, and I did not find in them the profit which I found in the great Qur'ān; for it calls to ascribing all greatness and majesty to God, and prevents from delving deeply into the preoccupation with objections and contradictions. This is so only because of our knowledge that human minds come to nothing and fade away in these treacherous defiles and hidden ways.[158]

The same view also appears in Book One of the *Maṭālib*, where he states, "Whoever abandons obstinacy and experiences the like of my experience will realise that truth is as I have described".[159] But what is the 'method of the Qur'ān'? And in what way is it a superior alternative?

For this, we need to revisit al-Rāzī's later theory of prophecy. Revelation, he argues, will have spiritually transformative features in its style and content that are ideal for perfecting human souls. For instance, the 'method' of revealed religions generally, and Islam in particular, is to attribute all perfections to God and to exhort people to proclaim His greatness to the maximum extent—mainly by affirming attributes of majesty (*jalāl*) and beneficence (*ikrām*)—while avoiding intricate theological problems, which may cause confusion in people's minds. It will then prohibit believers from 'delving deeply' into theological details of the various aspects of God's greatness and divinity, some of which may appear irreconcilable. These and other transformative features of prophecy correspond to al-Rāzī's description of the method of the Qur'ān.[160] This is described in his *Asrār al-tanzīl*, where he comments on Qur. 7:54–5, as follows:

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[157] Cf. p. 187–8 *supra*.

[158] *Waṣiyya*, 640. I made much use of Tony Street's translation ("Life and works", 136–7).

[159] *Maṭālib*, 1, 236. Ibn Taymiyya (*Nubuwwāt*, 52–3; cf. *Dar'*, 1, 159–60) sometimes highlights al-Rāzī's scepticism by blending these two statements and the conclusion of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* loosely: "I have contemplated the methods of *kalām* and the systems of *falsafa*, and have not found them capable of curing the ill or quenching the thirsty. I have found the most immediate method to be the method of the Qur'ān. I read in affirmation, [etc., see p. 187–8 *supra*]. Whoever experiences the like of my experience will realise the like of my realisation."

[160] Cf. *Maṭālib*, 1, 216.

> His saying, "Verily, His are the creation and the command", contains a remarkable secret and a profound wisdom; namely, that if you witness signs of [divine] governance and design in the various parts of the heavens, the planets and the earth, your heart will desire to know the aspects of wisdom in each one of them in detail (*ʿalā sabīl al-tafṣīl*). It will then be said to you: Halt at your level, do not venture beyond your limits, nor plunge your mind into an endless ocean, nor set off to surmount a summit-less mountain, nor desire to fathom what is above your understanding, imagination, mind and soul! You are not one of those who could attain these illuminations. Rather, admit your incapacity, humility, and shortcoming, and proclaim the perfect majesty and ultimate greatness of the Creator of these beings summarily (*ʿalā sabīl al-ijmāl*); and say: "Verily, His are creation, command, wisdom, might, exaltedness, dominion and greatness, blessed be God, the Lord of the worlds, He who governs all bodies, souls, higher beings and lower beings!" Having abandoned wading into those details and recognised this greatness summarily, at this stage, you should return to yourself and consider your incapacity and shortcoming. Then busy yourself with prayer and supplication.
>
> Herein lies the ultimate level attainable by the spiritually advanced ones (*ṣiddīqīn*) and the acme of the thoughts of knowers (*ʿārif*), beyond which minds cannot venture. ... To this God, exalted, alludes towards the end of this verse in His saying: "Supplicate your Lord humbly and secretly".
>
> How beautiful these pointers (*talwīḥ*), contained in the great Qurʾān, are! ... No method (*ṭarīq*) occurs to the mind or imagination of this humble person (*miskīn*), who is the author of the present book, which is better, more advantageous or more attractive (*ajdhab*) for human souls and intellects towards the presence of Him who is Holy, One and Everlasting, than these divine expositions and lofty secrets![161]

A detailed account of this notion of the method of the Qurʾān goes beyond the scope of the present study and will require a dedicated and comprehensive study of both the *Tafsīr* and *Asrār al-tanzīl*, in light of al-Rāzī's later theory of prophecy.

His statement at the end of *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, that the 'method of the Qurʾān' is superior to the discursive method, and his citations of Qurʾānic verses that affirm seemingly irreconcilable aspects of divinity, should be understood as stemming from his view that the Qurʾān is spiritually transformative. Rational theology, it seems, will in many ways often conflict with this process. Though, in places,

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[161] *Asrār al-tanzīl*, 372–3; cf. 376. The same points, he goes on to add, are highlighted in Qur. 3:190–1.

al-Rāzī argues that this applies specifically to the level of average believers, who constitute the public (*jumhūr*), he often indicates that the method of the Qur'ān is effective at all stages of human development, including the most advanced. He writes in the *Tafsīr*:

> Sciences are either theoretical or practical. The most sublime and complete among the theoretical sciences is the knowledge of God's essence, attributes, acts, judgements and names. You cannot find these sciences more complete and sublime than in [the Qur'ān]. The practical sciences concern either bodily acts or acts of the heart, also known as 'moral purity' and the 'purification (*tazkiya*) of the self'. You cannot find these two sciences as you would in this Book.
>
> God decreed that one who studies it and holds fast to it will gain worldly honour and after-worldly happiness. I have transmitted various rational and transmitted sciences, but I have not gained as much religious and worldly happiness from any of these sciences as I have from serving this discipline [i.e. Qur'ānic exegesis].[162]

Having found refuge in spiritual discipline and in the guidance and inspiration of the Qur'ān, al-Rāzī does not arrive at despair. What *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt* expresses, rather, is a sense of utter alienation (*waḥsha*) in this world.

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[162] *Tafsīr*, 13, 80.

APPENDIX

RISĀLAT DHAMM LADHDHĀT AL-DUNYĀ

The Manuscripts and the Critical Edition

I have been able to locate seven manuscripts of al-Rāzī's *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*, of which I have been able to have access to five. Two others are currently inaccessible (assuming they have survived contemporary devastation in Baghdad and Kabul). The following are brief descriptions of the manuscripts used, along with the abbreviations for those used in the edition.

1. Berlin State Library, Petermann II, 10 (pp. 244–72):[1]

Title: *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā.*
Dimensions: 18.5 × 14.2; 16.6 × 11.8 cm. 19–20 lines.
Dated: Friday, 12 Dhū al-Ḥijja 610 A.H. (1214).
Copyist: Ṭufayl Ibn Muṭahhar Ibn Abī Saʿīd al-Faḍlī al-Ṭafīlī.
Handwriting: *naskh.*
Abbreviation: ل.

Beginning:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله الواحد الأحد ...

End:

تمّ كتاب ذمّ لذّات الدنيا، تصنيف الإمام فخر الدين محمّد بن عمر بن الحسين الرازي رحمه الله، على يد طُفيل بن مُطَهَّر الفَضليّ، يوم الجمعة الثاني عشر من ذي الحجّة سنة عشرٍ وستمئةٍ. اللهمّ اغفر لكاتبه ولوالديه، آمين.

[1] W. Ahlwardt, "Die Handschriften-Verzeichnisse der Königlichen Bibliothek zu Berlin, XVI", p. 25, no. 5426. This is the only MS of this work listed by Brockelmann (*GAL* I, 669).

2. Princeton University Library, Garret (Yahuda section) 308 (fol. 130b–142a):[2]

Title: *Kitāb Taḥqīr al-ladhdhāt.*
Dimensions: 24 × 18; 17.8 × 11.8 cm. 23 lines.
Dated: 677 A.H. (1278–9).
Handwriting: *naskh.*
Abbreviation: س.

Beginning:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله ربّ العالمين. والصلاة على أفضل خلقه في السماوات العلى، وتحت الأرضين السفلى، خصوصاً على محمّد وآله، نبيّ الرحمة، وإمام العصمة والكرامة. أمّا بعد. فقد سألتني ...

End:

... يا أرحم الراحمين. وصلّى الله على سيّدنا محمّد وآله الطيّبين الطاهرين. تمّ كتاب تحقير اللذات، للإمام فخر الدين الرازي رحمه الله. قُوبِل الكتابُ.

3. Marʿashī-Najafī Library 4416(3) (fol. 110b–129b):[3]

Title: *Al-Ladhdhāt.*
Dimensions: 15 × 20.5; approx. 9.5 × 16.1 cm. 19–22 lines.
Dated: 731 A.H. (1331).
Copyist: Najm al-Dīn Abū Bakr Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhāb Dahistānī.
Handwriting: *naskh.*
Abbreviation: م.

Beginning:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. قال مولانا أستاذ الدنيا، علاّمة الورى، أفضل المتقدّمين والمتأخّرين، خاتم المجتهدين، الداعي إلى الحقّ، حجّة الله على الخلق، فخر الحقّ والملّة والدين، أبو عبد الله محمّد بن عمر بن الحسين الرازي، قدّس الله روحَه العزيز: الحمد لله الواحد الأحد ...

[2] R. McChesney, *Catalogue of Arabic Manuscripts*, 213, no. 2486.
[3] M. Marʿashī, *Fihrist nuskhehā-ye khaṭṭī*, 12, 17.

End:

... يا أرحم الراحمين. وصلّى الله على سيّد الخلائق محمّدٍ وعلى آله الطيّبين الطاهرين.

4. Marʿashī-Najafī Library 286(26) (fol. 247b–255b):[4]

Title: *Taḥqīr al-ladhdhāt.*
Dimensions: 18 × 27.5; 11 × 13.5 cm. 27 lines.
Dated: 1072 A.H. (1662).
Copyist: Shāh Murād Farāhānī.[5]
Handwriting: *nastaʿlīq.*

Beginning:

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله ربّ العالمين. والصلاة على أفضل خلقه في السماوات العلى، وتحت الأرضين السفلى، خصوصاً على محمّدٍ وآله، نبيّ الرحمة، وإمام العصمة والكرامة. أمّا بعد. فقد سألتني ...

End:

... يا أرحم الراحمين. وصلّى الله على سيّدنا محمّدٍ وآله الطيّبين الطاهرين. تمّ كتاب تحقير اللذات للإمام فخر الدين الرازي رحمه الله.

5. The British Library, I.O. (India Office Library) Islamic 3832 (fol. 85b–95b):[6]

Title: *Kitāb Taḥqīr al-ladhdhāt.*
Dimensions: 27.7 × 14.8; 19.5 × 8.5 cm. 21 lines.
Dated: 1063 A.H. (1653).
Handwriting: exquisite *nastaʿlīq.*

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[4] M. Marʿashī, *Fihrist nuskhehā-ye khaṭṭī*, 1, 322–3.

[5] Dating and copyist: Marʿashī, *Fihrist nuskhehā-ye khaṭṭī*, 1, 333.

[6] P. Stocks, *Subject Guide*, 217. The Library, I was informed, has no other record of the MS (despite the reference in the *Subject Guide* to a handwritten entry). The MS bears an India Office stamp dating to 1913.

Beginning:

كتاب للفخر الرازي في جواب أسئلة أحوال اللذات المطلوبة في الدنيا والكشف عن حصر أقسامها وبيان ما فيها من الخيرات والراحات والآفات والمخافات. بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله ربّ العالمين. والصلاة على أفضل خلقه في السماوات العلى، وتحت الأرضين السفلى، خصوصاً على محمّدٍ وآله، نبيّ الرحمة، وإمام العصمة والكرامة. أمّا بعد. فقد سألتني ...

End:

... يا أرحم الراحمين. وصلّى الله على سيدنا ونبينا وشفيع جميع ذنوبنا ودافع همومنا محمد وآله الطيبين الطاهرين. تمّت الكتاب تحقير اللذات للإمام فخر الدين الرازي عليه الرحمة والمغفرة.

The two other manuscripts located are:

6. Al-Qādiriyya Library (Baghdad) 654(3) (fol. 19–27), entitled *Risālat Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā*.[7]

7. Ri'āsat al-Maṭbū'āt Library (Kabul) 87, entitled *Risāla fī l-ladhdhāt al-maṭlūba fī l-dunyā*.[8]

For the edition, MSS 1, 2 and 3 are used. The variants among them are numerous, but generally minor. MSS 4 and 5 appear to be copied, or derived from, MS 2, and do not improve the text in any way. On the other hand, MSS 1 and 3 have much in common, and probably have a common source; yet neither could be derived from the other.

In this edition, the text is corrected in accordance with modern conventions for spelling, without note of the original spelling in the manuscripts. For example, ثلثة is changed to ثلاثة; هوا to هواء; رياسة to رئاسة; ههنا to ها هنا; and حيوة to حياة. Nunation and some diacritical marks have been added where needed.

[7] I. Rauf, *Al-Āthār al-Khaṭṭiyya*, 3, 13–4.
[8] P. De Beaurecueil, "*Al-Makhṭūṭāt al-ʿArabiyya fī Afghānistān*", 20.

The Title

The epistle is given the following titles in manuscripts and later external references:

1. *Dhamm ladhdhāt al-dunyā* (*Censure of the Pleasures of This World*).[9]
2. *Risāla fī Dhamm al-dunyā* (*Censure of This World*).[10]
3. *Taḥqīr al-ladhdhāt* (*Degrading Pleasures*).[11]
4. *Risāla fī l-ladhdhāt al-maṭlūba fī l-dunyā* (*On the Pleasures Sought in This World*).[12]
5. *Aqsām al-ladhdhāt* (*Divisions of Pleasure*).[13]

The fourth and fifth titles appear to be taken directly from the epistle's introduction and describe its contents superficially. In my opinion, the first title appears most authentic. It describes the work's main parts and conclusions, without being simply drawn from its introduction. It also agrees with the author's description of the second section as "the section on the censure (*dhamm*) of imaginary pleasures", in his final note in the work, preserved only in the Berlin MS. The second title seems to be a shortened version of the first.

Finally, al-Rāzī refers to the work loosely both as a book (*kitāb*) and as an epistle (*risāla*).[14]

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9 The Berlin MS; and the Baghdad MS catalogue entry.

10 Al-Qifṭī, *Akhbār*, 192; al-Ṣafadī, *Wāfī*, 4, 255; Ibn Abī Uṣaybiʿa, *ʿUyūn*, 2, 29.

11 The Princeton MS; the British Library MS; and the Marʿashī-Najafī 286 MS. All, however, share a common source.

12 The Kabul MS catalogue entry.

13 Ibn Taymiyya (e.g. *Darʾ*, 1, 159) and Ibn Qayyim al-Jawziyya (*Ijtimāʿ*, 120). However, both almost certainly used the same manuscript.

14 *Dhamm al-ladhdhāt*, 3; 44.

رسالة ذمّ لذّات الدنيا

فخر الدين الرازي

بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم

الحمد لله الواحد الأحد، المصوِّر الصمد، السلام السرمد، لا عُدَد له ولا عَدَدٌ، ولا حدّ لدوامه[1] ولا أمدٌ، ولا كسر لعسكره ولا مددٌ. له العلوُّ والإكرام، والسموُّ والدوام. إكرامه حصّل كلّ مُراد ومرام، وطَوله سهّل الحلالَ وحرّم الحرامَ. أمرُه أدار السماكَ الرامح، وحُكمُه أحكَمَ مُهِمَّ السرِّ[2] الطامح. إعلامه أوصل إلى كلّ سرورٍ، وإلهامه عمَر صدرَ كلِّ مكسورٍ. ثمّ الصلاة على أفاضل خلقه في السموات العلى، وتحت الأرضين السفلى، خصوصاً على محمدٍ نبيّ الرحمة وإمام العصمة والكرامة[3].

أمّا بعد، فقد سألتَني عن أحوال اللذّات المطلوبة في الدنيا، والكشفَ عن حصرِ أقسامها، وبيانَ ما فيها من الخيرات واللذّات[4] والراحات والآفات والمخافات. فكتبتُ لك هذا المختصر على سبيل الارتجال. ومن الله التوفيق في جميع الأحوال[5].

وأقول: إنّ اللذّات المطلوبة في هذه الحياة العاجلة محصورةٌ في أقسام ثلاثة. فأدونها هي اللذّات الحسّيّة، وهي قضاء الشهوتين. وأوسطها اللذّات الخياليّةً، وهي اللذّات الحاصلة من الاستعلاء والرئاسة. [م: ١١١أ] وأعلاها اللذّات

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[1] م: له.

[2] م: النسر.

[3] س: "بسم الله الرحمن الرحيم. الحمد لله ربّ العالمين. والصلاة على أفضل خلقه في السماوات العلى، وتحت الأرضين السفلى، خصوصاً على محمّدٍ وآله، نبيّ الرحمة، وإمام العصمة والكرامة".

[4] سقطت من س، م.

[5] في ل زيادة: قال رضي الله عنه.

العقليّة، وهي[٦] اللذّات[٧] الحاصلة بسبب معرفة الأشياء والوقوف على حقائقها. فهذا ضبطٌ حَسَنٌ معقولٌ[٨] في هذا الباب.

وأيضاً، فسُعود[٩] الإنسانِ في أوّل الأمر إنما يحصل بهذه اللذّات الحسّيّة. ثمّ إذا توغّل فيها، وقضى وطرَه منها، فحينئذ تسمو نفسُه إلى المرتبة الثانية، وهي الاستعداد باللذّات الخياليّة، وهي الرئاسةُ، ونفاذُ القولِ[١٠]، والأمرُ والنهيُ. فإذا توغّل فيها، ورُزق الوقوفَ على ما فيها من الآفات والبليّات، ترقّى منها إلى المرتبة العالية، وهي طلب اللذّات العقليّة، والاستعداد بمعرفة هذه[١١] الأشياء بقدر الطاقة البشريّة.

ولمّا وقفتُ على هذا الضبط، فلا جرم رتّبنا[١٢] هذا الكتابَ على ثلاثة أقسام:

فأوّلها: في البحث عن حقائق اللذّات الحسيّة، [ل: ٢٤٥] وبيان ما فيها من الخيرات والآفات.

وثانيها: في البحث عن حقائق اللذّات[١٣] الخياليّة، وهي لذّة الرئاسة والنفاذ، وبيانِ ما فيها من جهات الخير والشرّ.

وثالثها: في البحث عن حقائق اللذّات العقليّة، وهي لذّة العلم والإحاطة بحقائق الأشياء، وبيانِ ما فيها من جهات الرغبة والنفرة.

ونسأل الله الكريمَ أن يطلعنا على حقائق الأشياء بقدر الطاقة البشريّة.

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[٦] "اللذات العقلية وهي" سقطت من م.

[٧] "هي اللذات الحاصلة من الاستعلاء والرئاسة وأعلاها اللذات العقلية وهي اللذات" سقطت من س.

[٨] ل: معقول حسن.

[٩] س، م: فشعور.

[١٠] ل: الأمر لقول.

[١١] سقطت من م.

[١٢] س: رتبت.

[١٣] سقطت من س.

فالقسم الأوّل: الكلام في اللذّات الحسّيّة

اعلم أنّ مطالب [م: ١١١ب] الخلق من الأحوال المحسوسة محصورةٌ في نوعين. أحدهما دفعُ الألم، والثاني تحصيل اللذّة.

أمّا دفع الآلام[١٤] الحسيّة، فقد تَوَصَّلوا[١٥] إليه بطُرق. أحدها لبس الثياب؛ وذلك لأنّ جلد الإنسان جلدٌ ناعمٌ لطيفٌ، سريع التأثُّر من الحرّ والبرد؛ فاحتاج في دفع هذا النوع من الإيذاء إلى لبس الثياب. والتحقيق أنّ لبس الثوب[١٦] ضررٌ؛ لأنّه يصير حمّالاً لتلك[١٧] الثياب؛ وحمل الجسم الثقيل إتعابٌ للبدن. إلاّ أنّ لبس الثوب [س: ١٢٩أ] لمّا دفع تلك المضارّ العظيمة، صار ذلك الضررُ الحاصل من لبس الثوب دافعاً لضررٍ أعظم وأعلى منه[١٨]. فصار تحمُّلُ الضررِ القليل الذي يوجِب دفعَ الضررِ العظيم شبيهاً[١٩] لحصول[٢٠] الخير واللذّة والراحة. وفي الحقيقة، ليس الأمرُ إلاّ ما ذكرنا[٢١]، من أنّ حاصله يرجع إلى دفع الضرر الزائد بتحمّل الضرر الناقص.

و[٢٢] مثالُه ما يُحكى أنّ بعض الناس دخل على إبراهيم بن سيّار النظّام المتكلّم، فرآه و[٢٣] في يده قدحٌ من الدواء المرّ البشع الكريه[٢٤]، وكان يشقّ عليه

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[١٤] ل، س: الالم.
[١٥] ل: يوصل.
[١٦] س: الثياب.
[١٧] ل: لذلك.
[١٨] س: منه وأعلى.
[١٩] س: سبباً.
[٢٠] م: بحصول.
[٢١] س: ذكرناه.
[٢٢] سقطت من ل.
[٢٣] سقطت من س، م.
[٢٤] س: فراه في يده من الدواء المر البشع الكريهة.

جدّاً[٢٥] تناولُه. فسأله عن كيفيّة حاله. فقال: "أصبحتُ في دار بليّات، أدفع آفات بآفات". وهذا الذي قاله النظّامُ كلامٌ كلّيٌّ، و[٢٦] ضابطٌ حَسَنٌ، وقانونٌ مطّرِدٌ في أحوالٍ الدنيا.

والطريق الثاني من طرق دفع الآفاتِ بناءُ الدور والمساكن. والمقصود من بنائها أنّ الإنسان خُلِق في مرتعة الآفات وممرّ المخافات. [م: ١١٢أ] فإذا[٢٧] بقي في الصحراء، بقي خائفاً على نفسه وماله وأولاده. فإذا بنى بناءً حصيناً محكَماً، و[٢٨] دخل في تلك الدار، وغلّق على نفسه الأبوابَ، وبالغ في إحكامها، فحينئذ يبقى[٢٩] آمناً من [ل: ٢٤٥] بعض الوجوه على نفسه وماله. فكان المقصودُ من بناء الأبنية والدور السعي في دفع الآفات، لا في جلب المنافع. فالملبس والمسكن وُضِعا[٣٠] لدفع الآفة، لا لجلب المنفعة.

فأمّا الطرق الموصلة إلى تحصيل اللذّات، فهي محصورةٌ في قضاء شهوة البطن وقضاء شهوة[٣١] الفرج؛ وليس لهما ثالثٌ البتّة. ونحن ننبّهك على ما فيهما[٣٢] من الدناءة والخساسة وسقوط الحال[٣٣] والتشبّه بالبهائم الخسيسة.

وأقول، قبل الخوض[٣٤] في بيان تلك التفاصيل: إنّ الخطباء والشعراء والفصحاء، إذا أرادوا الخوضَ في تحقير أمر الدنيا وبيان سقوطها ودناءتها، رجع[٣٥] حاصلُ

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[٢٥] س: حدّه.

[٢٦] سقطت من ل.

[٢٧] ل: فلو.

[٢٨] سقطت من ل.

[٢٩] م: يكون.

[٣٠] س: وضع.

[٣١] "قضاء شهوة" سقطت من س.

[٣٢] س: فيها.

[٣٣] س: حال. م: المروءة.

[٣٤] ل: للخوض.

[٣٥] م: يرجع.

كلامهم، بعد التطويلات العظيمة، إلى مقدّمات قليلة.

فأحدها أنهم يقولون: "إنها غير باقية، بلْ هي منقضيةٌ فانيةٌ. فوجب على العاقل[٣٦] أن لا يغترّ بها." واعلم أنّ هذا كالإشارة[٣٧] إلى أنها في نفسها طيّبةٌ لذيذةٌ؛ إلاّ أنها لمّا كانت سريعةَ الانقراض والانقضاء[٣٨]، وجب على العاقل الاحترازُ عنها[٣٩].

وثانيها أنهم[٤٠] قالوا: "إنّ طيّباتها ممزوجةٌ بالآلام[٤١]، وراحاتها مخلوطةٌ بالجراحات". وهذا أيضاً يدلّ على أنهم يعتقدون فيها أنها طيّباتٌ وسعاداتٌ، إلاّ أنها لمّا كانت [م: ٢١١ب] ممزوجةً بالآفات، مخلوطةً بالمخافات، وجب على العاقل الاحترازُ عنها.

وثالثها أنهم يقولون: "إنّ الأراذل من الناس قد [س: ١٢٩ب] يشارِكون الأفاضلَ في تلك اللذّات والراحات؛ بل الغالب أنّ الأراذل تزيد أحوالهم على أحوال[٤٢] الأفاضل في هذه الخيرات الحسّيّة واللذّات الجسدانيّة زيادةً فاحشةً عظيمةً؛ فوجب[٤٣] الاحترازُ عنها". وهذا أيضاً يدلّ على أنهم يعتقدون أنّ هذه اللذّات خيراتٌ وسعاداتٌ؛ إلاّ أنّ كونَ الأراذل مشارِكين للأفاضل فيها[٤٤] وزائدين عليهم في درجاتها ممّا يوجِب الفرارَ منها، لخسّة الشركاء[٤٥].

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[٣٦] س: فوجب للعاقل.

[٣٧] س: كاشارة.

[٣٨] ل: الانقضاء والانقراض.

[٣٩] م: عن التعلّق بها.

[٤٠] سقطت من س.

[٤١] ل، س: الالم.

[٤٢] س: حال.

[٤٣] ل: يوجب.

[٤٤] س: فيها للأفاضل.

[٤٥] "لخسّة الشركاء" سقطت من س، ل.

فهذه مجامع مِن[٤٦] كلام الفصحاء والخطباء في تقبيح أحوال الدنيا. وهي بأسرها تدلّ على أنها في أنفسها طيّباتٌ وخيراتٌ، إلاّ أنّه يجب تركُها والإعراضُ عنها، لأجل أنّه يلزمها هذه اللوازم الثلاثة المكروهة[٤٧]. وأمّا الحكماء، فإنهم بيّنوا أنّ هذه الأحوال ليست في أنفسها سعاداتٍ [ل: ٢٤٧] ولا خيراتٍ، بل هي أحوالٌ خسيسةٌ ومطالب دنيئةٌ في ذواتها.

وإذا كان الأمر كذلك، وجب علينا أن نرتّب الكلامَ في هذا الباب على مقامين. أحدهما في بيان[٤٨] أنّ هذه الأحوال خسيسةٌ بحسب ماهيّاتها وذواتها. والثاني في بيان[٤٩] أنّ بتقدير كونها أحوالاً شريفةً، إلاّ أنها لا بُدّ وأن يلزمها لوازم مكروهةٌ.

أمّا المقام الأوّل، فنقول: في تقرير[٥٠] هذا المطلوب طريقان. أحدهما: أنّ هذه الأحوال التي يُظَنّ أنها لذّاتٌ، فهي في الحقيقة ليست بلذّات، وإنما حاصلها يرجع إلى دفع الآلام. الثاني[٥١]: بيانُ أنها، وإن كانت لذّاتٍ، إلاّ أنها [م: ١١٣أ] لذّاتٌ خسيسةٌ حقيرةٌ جدّاً.

أمّا النوع الأوّل من البيان، فتقريرُه من وجوه.

الأوّل: إنّا رأينا أنّ[٥٢] الإنسان كلّما كان أكثر جوعاً وأشدّ احتياجاً إلى الأكل، كان التذاذُه[٥٣] بالأكل أتمّ؛ وكلّما كان عهدُه بالوقاع أطول، كان

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[٤٦] سقطت من ل، م.

[٤٧] س: المكروهة الثلاثة.

[٤٨] "في بيان" سقطت من م.

[٤٩] م: وثانيهما بيان.

[٥٠] س: تقدير.

[٥١] س: الآم والثاني.

[٥٢] سقطت من ل، م.

[٥٣] ل: الالتذاذ.

التذاذُه[٥٤] به أكملَ. ولا شكّ أنّ الجوعَ ألمٌ[٥٥] شديدٌ. وأيضاً، الاحتياج الشديد إلى الوقاع ألمٌ. فلمّا رأينا أنّه كلّما كانت هذه الآلامُ أشدّ وأشقّ، كان دفعها[٥٦] ألذّ وأطيب، غلَب على الظنّ أنّه لا معنى لهذه اللذّات والراحات إلاّ مجرّد دفع تلك الآلام السابقة[٥٧].

ألا ترى أنّ مَن جلَسَ في الحمّام الحارّ، وغلب استيلاءُ تلك الحرارة عليه، فإذا فتَح البابَ، ودخل من[٥٨] ذلك الباب نسيمٌ باردٌ، فإنّ[٥٩] ذلك الإنسان يستلذّ بذلك[٦٠] الهواء البارد استلذاذاً[٦١] في الغاية! وإذا أكل طعاماً غليظاً وعطش جداً، فإذا شرب الماءَ المبرّدَ بالثلج، فإنّه يجد منه لذّةً عظيمةً كاملةً! وما ذاك إلاّ لأنّه[٦٢] عَظُمَ تألّمُه بسبب الهواء الحارّ الذي في[٦٣] الحمام، وعَظُمَ تألّمُه بسبب أكل ذلك الطعام الغليظ. فلمّا وصل إليه الهواءُ البارد، زال عنه [س: ١٣٠أ] تلك الحرارةُ المؤلمة. ولمّا شرب الماءَ البارد، زال عنه ذلك العطشُ المؤلم. فبقدر[٦٤] الضرر الحاصل من تلك الحرارة تحصل اللذّةُ بسبب استنشاقِ ذلك الهواء البارد وشُربِ ذلك الماء البارد.

فعَلِمنا أنّه لا حاصل لهذه اللذّات الحسّيّة إلاّ دفع هذه الآلام والأوجاع. وذلك

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[٥٤] ل: الالتذاذ.
[٥٥] ل: ألم الجوع.
[٥٦] ل: كان هذا الألم ... كان دفعه.
[٥٧] ل: تلك الالم السابق.
[٥٨] ل: في.
[٥٩] ل: كان.
[٦٠] ل، م: ذلك.
[٦١] سقطت من س.
[٦٢] س، م: انه.
[٦٣] م: الحارة في.
[٦٤] م: فبتضرّر.

يدلّ على أنّ هذه[٦٥] الأحوال التي نتخيّل أنها لذّاتٌ، فهي في أنفسها ليست لذّات، بل لا [م: ١١٣ب] حاصل لها إلاّ دفع الآلام والأوجاع. بل نقول: الإنسان إذا أراد قضاءَ الحاجة من البول والغائط، فربما تعذّر عليه ذلك[٦٦] لأسباب اتّفاقيّة[٦٧] من خارج؛ وحينئذ[٦٨] يعظم ألُمه[٦٩] بسبب [ل: ٢٤٨] إمساك تلك الفضلات. ثمّ بعد تلك[٧٠] الآلام الشديدة، إذا قدر على دفعها، وَجَد لذّةً عظيمةً[٧١] وراحةً كاملةً. وكلّما كان تألّمُه بسبب إمساكها أشدَّ، كان التذاذُه بدفعها أكمل؛ حتى أنّ كثيراً من الناس قالوا: "هذه اللذّة أقوى من لذّة الأكل والشرب والبعال[٧٢]". وذلك يدلّ على أنّه لا حاصل لهذه اللذّات إلاّ دفع الآلام.

الوجه الثاني في بيان المطلوب الذي ذكرناه أنّ من المعلوم بالبديهة أنّه كلّما كانت[٧٣] شهوة الفوز[٧٤] بالشيء أقوى وأكمل، كانت اللذّةُ الحاصلة بسبب وجدانه أقوى وأكمل[٧٥]. فإن لم تحصل تلك الشهوة، لم تحصل اللذّةُ بسبب وجدانه البتّة[٧٦].

ألا ترى أنّ مَن رمى قلادةً مِن[٧٧] الدرّ الثمين[٧٨] إلى كلبٍ، ورمى عظماً إلى

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[٦٥] سقطت من س.

[٦٦] ل: ذلك عليه.

[٦٧] س: للأسباب العايقة.

[٦٨] س: فحينئذ.

[٦٩] ل:ألم.

[٧٠] س: ذلك.

[٧١] سقطت من ل.

[٧٢] س: الفعال. والبعال: النكاح.

[٧٣] ل، م: كان.

[٧٤] س: القوم.

[٧٥] س: وجدانه أتم.

[٧٦] "فإن لم تحصل تلك الشهوة لم تحصل اللذة بسبب وجدانه البتة" ساقطة من س.

[٧٧] سقطت من م.

[٧٨] سقطت من س.

إنسان، فإنّه لا تحصل اللذّةُ لواحد منهما؛ لأنّ الكلب لا يشتهي الدرَّ، والإنسانَ لا يشتهي العظمَ. أمّا لو قَلَبتَ القضيّةَ[٧٩]، ورميتَ القلادة من الدرّ[٨٠] إلى الإنسان، عظم فرحُه بها وعظمت لذّتُه لوجدانها[٨١]. ولو رَميتَ العظمَ إلى الكلب[٨٢]، عظم فرحُه بوجدانه. فثبت أنّه[٨٣] كلّما كانت الحاجةُ إلى الشيء[٨٤] أشدّ، وكانت شهوةُ وجدانه أتمّ وأكمل، كان الفوزُ به ألذّ. وإذا ثبت هذا، فمقدار[٨٥] اللذّة الحاصلة في الحال مساويةٌ لمقدار المضرّة الحاصلة بسبب الاحتياج إليه في الماضي. وإذا كان الأمرُ كذلك، فحينئذ تتقابل اللذّةُ الحاصلة في الحال بالألم الحاصل في الماضي. وإذا تقابلا، تساقطا، وصار كأنّه لم يوجد البتّة. مثالُه أنّ من مزّق بطنَ [م: ١١٤أ] إنسان، ثمّ أخذ يعالجه بالخياطة ووضع المراهم عليها، فإنّ ذلك لا يُعدّ لذّةً ولا سعادةً، بل يُعدّ مثلُ هذا الفعلِ جارياً مجرى العَبث. فكذلك[٨٦] ها هنا.

الوجه الثالث في بيان أنّ هذه اللذّات الحسّيّة خسيسةٌ جداً؛ وذلك أنها[٨٧] بأسرها لا تحصل إلاّ بواسطة مخامَرَة[٨٨] رطوبات عفنة منتنة مستحيلة مستقذَرة[٨٩]. أمّا لذّة الأكل، [س: ١٣٠ب] فالأمر[٩٠] فيها ظاهرٌ. لأنّ الإنسان لا يلتذّ بالطعام، إلاّ إذا وَضعه في فمه. ولا شكّ أنّ ذلك الطعام في تلك الساعة يمتزج برِيق الفم ويختلط به؛ ولا شكّ أنّه في نفسه شيءٌ مستقذَرٌ.

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[٧٩] ل: القصة.
[٨٠] "من الدر" سقطت من س، م.
[٨١] س، م: بوجدانها.
[٨٢] م: كلب.
[٨٣] س: ان.
[٨٤] س: شيء.
[٨٥] م: ثبت أن مقدار.
[٨٦] م: فكذا.
[٨٧] ل: لانها.
[٨٨] ل: مجاورة.
[٨٩] س: الرطوبات العفنة المنتنة المستحيلة المستقذَرة.
[٩٠] ل: فالألم.

والدليل عليه أنّ تلك اللقمة الممضوغة لو سقطت من الفم، فإنّ الإنسان يستقذرها، ولا يمكنه أن يردّها [ل: ٢٤٩] إلى فمه. وذلك يدلّ على أنّ اللذّة الحاصلة من الطعام لا تحصل إلاّ عند انعجان ذلك الطعام واختلاط أجزائه بتلك الرطوبات الفاسدة المستقذَرة.

وأيضاً، إنّ الإنسان إذا تناول الأطعمةَ المختلفة، وشربَ عليها الماءَ والفُقَّاع[٩١]، فإنّه تختلط[٩٢] تلك الأشياءُ بعضها بالبعض[٩٣] في المعدة، وكانت المعدةُ محتويةً قبل وصول[٩٤] الطعام إليها[٩٥] على أجزاءٍ كثيرةٍ من الصفراء والسوداء والبلغم، فيحصل في المعدة جسمٌ ثخينٌ من اختلاط تلك المطعومات والمشروبات ومن اختلاط السوداء والصفراء والبلغم بها. ولا شكّ أنّه جسمٌ في غاية الاستقذار والعفونة[٩٦].

وكذلك، فإنّ[٩٧] الإنسان إذا قاء، فإنّ ذلك القيء[٩٨] يكون في غاية الاستقذار[٩٩]. والشبع التامّ لا يحصل إلاّ عند احتواء المعدة على هذا الجسم[١٠٠]. فثبت أنّ اللذّة الحاصلة عند الأكل لا تحصل إلاّ عند اختلاط أجزاء[١٠١] الطعام [م: ١١٤ب] بالبُزاق والمخاط، وأنّ اللذّة الحاصلة عند الشبع لا تحصل إلاّ عند احتواء المعدة على ذلك الجسم المستقذَر المستخبَث.

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[٩١] الفقّاع شرابٌ يتّخذ من الشعير، سمي به لما يعلوه من الزبد.
[٩٢] م: ثم اختلط.
[٩٣] س: ببعض.
[٩٤] م: حلول.
[٩٥] "قبل وصول الطعام إليها" ساقطة من ل.
[٩٦] ل: في العفونة.
[٩٧] م: فلذلك إن.
[٩٨] سقطت من م.
[٩٩] "وكذلك فإن الإنسان ... الاستقذار" ساقطة من ل.
[١٠٠] في م زيادة: المستقذر.
[١٠١] س: الأجزاء من.

فثبت بهذه البيانات أنّ هذه اللذّات الحسّيّة لا تحصل إلاّ عند مخامَرَة الرطوبات العفنة القذرة. وذلك يدلّ على أنّ هذه اللذّة في غاية الخساسة[١٠٢]، وأنّ العاقل إنما يُقدِم على الأكل، لا لأجل أنّه يعدّه سعادةً وبهجةً، بل[١٠٣] لأجل أنه خُلق محتاجاً إليه. ولولا الاحتياج إليه، لما أَقدم عليه. ورأيتُ أنّ عبد القاهر النحويّ أنشأ هذا البيت:

لولا قضاءٌ جرى نَزَّهتُ أنملَتِي عن[١٠٤] أن تُلِمّ بمأكولٍ ومشروبِ[١٠٥]

وأمّا لذّة الوقاع، فخساستها أظهر من أن تحتاج إلى البيان. والذي يدلّ عليه أنّ أخسّ أعضاءِ الإنسان هو هذه الأعضاء المخصوصة. ولذلك، فإنّ طبائعَ جميع الخلق[١٠٦] وبدائهَ عقولهم تحملُهم على سترِ هذه الأعضاء وإخفائها عن عيون الناظرين؛ حتى[١٠٧] أنّ جماعةَ الهنود والزنوج الذين جرت عادتهم بأنهم لا يلبسون الثيابَ، و[١٠٨] يطوفون عراةً في الأسواق، فإنهم يستُرون هذه الأعضاء. وذلك يدلّ على[١٠٩] شهادة العقول بأنّ هذه الأعضاء أخسّ [س: ١٣١أ] أعضاء الإنسان.

ثمّ إنّ لذّة المواقَعة[١١٠] لا تتمّ إلاّ بمماسّة هذه الأعضاء. وأيضاً[١١١]، فهذه المماسّة لا تفيد اللذّة إلاّ عند التلطّخ بتلك الرطوبات المتولّدة في داخل تلك الأعضاء. وتمام اللذّة [ل: ٢٥٠] إنما يحصل بانفصال النطفة؛ وهي أيضاً رطوبةٌ عفنةٌ

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[١٠٢] ل: للخساسة.
[١٠٣] س: لكن.
[١٠٤] ل: من.
[١٠٥] من البحر البسيط.
[١٠٦] ل: الخلايق.
[١٠٧] س: حُكى.
[١٠٨] سقطت من س.
[١٠٩] في م زيادة: أن.
[١١٠] س: اللذة الموافقة.
[١١١] سقطت من م.

قذرةٌ خسيسةٌ. وكلّ ذلك يدلّ على أنّ هذه اللذّات لا تحصل إلاّ بالتلطّخ بهذه الرطوبات العفنة القذرة الخسيسة[112]. وذلك يدلّ على[113] أنها [م: ١١٥أ] ليست من جنس الخيرات واللذّات والسعادات. بل الإنسان يصير كالملجأ إليها والمضطرّ إلى مباشرتها. فإذا دَفَع تلك[114] الآلام والأوجاع، تخلّصَ منها واستراح، بسبب إزالة تلك[115] المؤذيات؛ فيظنّ أنها لذّاتٌ وخيراتٌ[116].

وممّا يدلّ عليه أنّ الرجل إذا احتُبِس في موضع لا يمكنه القيامُ إلى الخلاء، وصار مضطرّاً إليه، وأنّه بالتكلّف الشديد يمسك الطّبيعةَ، فإنّه يقع في مشقّة شديدة وبلاءٍ عظيم. فإذا تمكّن من الذهاب إلى الخلاء، وقدر على دفع تلك الخبائث، وجدَ لذّةً عظيمةً عند دفعها وإرسالها. ومعلومٌ أنّه لا معنى لتلك اللذّة إلاّ إزالة تلك المؤلمات. فكذا ها هنا. فثبت أنّ هذه الأحوال إمّا أن لا تكون لذّاتٍ، أو[117] إن كانت لذّاتٍ، فهي في غاية الخساسة ونهاية القذارة.

و[118] **الوجه الرابع** في بيان خساسة هذه الأحوال: الاستقراء الدالّ على إطباق جميع العقلاء على هذه المقدّمة. أمّا إطباقهم[119] على تحقير لذّة الأكل؛ وذلك لأنهم إذا شاهدوا إنساناً كثيرَ الأكل عظيم الرغبة في اللقمة، استحقروه ونظروا[120] إليه بعين الإزراء والإهانة، وحكموا عليه بالبهيميّة. ولذلك قالوا: "البطنة تُذهِب الفطنةَ". ولو علموا أنّ إنساناً صفتُه أنّه جعل أيّامَه وأوقاته مقصورةً على إعداد

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[112] م: الخسيسة القذرة.
[113] "يدل على" سقطت من س.
[114] ل: ذلك.
[115] ل: ذلك.
[116] م: خيرات ولذات.
[117] س: و.
[118] سقطت في س.
[119] "على هذه المقدّمة أمّا إطباقهم" سقطت من م.
[120] س: نظروه.

المأكولات والمشروبات، فإنهم يستحقرونه ويذمّونه[١٢١] ولا يقيمون له وزناً البتّة. أمّا إذا اعتقدوا في إنسانٍ أنّه يقلّل من الأكل والشرب، وأنّه لا يَلتفت إليه ولا يقيم له وزناً، فإنهم يعظّمونه وينقادون له ويعتقدون فيه أنّه من زمرة الملائكة. وهذا يدلّ على أنّ فطرة جميع الخلق شاهدةٌ بأنّ هذه الأحوال خسيسةٌ.

وأمّا إطباقهم على تحقير لذّة الوقاع، فمن وجوهٍ[١٢٢]. [م: ١١٥ب]

الأوّل: إطباق الكلّ على أنّ الألفاظ الدالّة على أحوال الوقاع يجعلونه من أعظم[١٢٣] أنواع الشتم والإهانة والإيذاء. وذلك يدلّ على إطباقهم [ل: ٢٥١] على تحقير شأن هذه اللذّات.

و[١٢٤] الثاني: إنّ كلّ عاقلٍ، فإنّه[١٢٥] يستحيي من الإقدام على الوقاع[١٢٦] بحضور الناس، بل يسعى في إخفائه وتبعيده [س: ١٣١ب] عن أعين الناس. والعاقل إنما يستحيي من إظهار الفعل القبيح، ولا يستحيي من إظهار الفعل[١٢٧] الحسن. فإطباقُهم على إخفائه يدلّ على كونهم مطبقين على أنّه من الأفعال القبيحة. فثبت بما ذكرنا[١٢٨] إطباقُ العقلاء على أنّ لذّات[١٢٩] الأكل والوقاع أحوالٌ خسيسةٌ حقيرةٌ لا يُلتفَت إليها البتّة.

الوجه الخامس في بيان خساسة هذه الأحوال أن نقول: أمّا اللذّة الحاصلة عند الأكل، فهي لذّةٌ ضعيفةٌ جداً. وكمالها إنما يحصل[١٣٠] في اللقمة الأولى والثانية عند

[١٢١] س: يستحقروه ويذموه.
[١٢٢] م: وجهين.
[١٢٣] ساقطة من س.
[١٢٤] سقطت من س.
[١٢٥] سقطت من ل.
[١٢٦] "على الوقاع" ساقطة من س.
[١٢٧] ساقطة من م.
[١٢٨] في ل زيادة: أن.
[١٢٩] ل: لذة.
[١٣٠] ل: أنها تحصل.

حصول الجوع الشديد. فإذا فتَر الجوعُ، قلّت[131] الرغبةُ؛ فضَعُف الالتذاذُ بالأكل. فثبت أنّ زمان حصول[132] هذه اللذّة زمانٌ قليلٌ.

ولذلك فإنّ[133] الناس يقولون: "إنّ الله تعالى رَفَع اللذّةَ عن أطعمة الأغنياء، وأودعها في أطعمة الفقراء". والسبب فيه أنّ الأغنياء لا يشتدّ جوعهم ولا تكمل حاجتهم؛ فلا جرم يقلّ التذاذهم بالطعام. وأمّا الفقراء فإنّه تشتدّ[134] حاجتُهم ويقوى جوعُهم؛ فلذلك يعظم التذاذهم بتناول تلك الأطعمة. وإذ قد[135] عرفتَ هذا، فنقول: اللذّة الحاصلة بالأكل حقيرةٌ من وجوه:

الأوّل أنّ هذه اللذّة لا تحصل[136] إلاّ في أوائل الأكل عند قيام الجوع الشديد والحاجة القويّة. فإذا ضعف الجوعُ، وقلّت الحاجةُ، ضعفت اللذّةُ.

الثاني أنّ [م: ١١٦أ] موضع حصول هذه اللذّة ليس إلاّ سطح الفم. فإذا انحدر منه إلى المريء، سقطت اللذّةُ.

و[137] الثالث أنّ لذّة الأكل في نوعها ليست حالةً قاهرةً، بل هي لذّةٌ ضعيفةٌ. فثبت أنّ هذه اللذّة حقيرةٌ من هذه الجهات[138].

وأمّا لذّة[139] الوقاع، فهي حقيرةٌ من وجوه. الأوّل[140] أنّ هذه اللذّة لا تحصل إلاّ في وقت الإنزال وانفصال النطفة. وأمّا[141] الأحوال[142] السابقة على هذه

[131] ل: وقلت. م: فاتت.
[132] ساقطة من س.
[133] س: ان.
[134] ل: فتشتد.
[135] س، م: واذا.
[136] م: تكمل.
[137] سقطت من س، م.
[138] ل: للجهات.
[139] سقطت من م.
[140] م: أولها.
[141] م: فأما.
[142] س: احوال.

الحالة، فهي حركاتٌ متعبةٌ[١٤٣]. وأمّا الأحوال الحاصلة بعد هذه الحالة، فهي ضعفُ القلب، وخفقان الفؤاد، واستيلاء العفونة على كلّ البدن. وبالجملة، فالأحوال السابقة والأحوال المستقبلة كلّها منفِّرةٌ متعبةٌ. فأمّا [ل: ٢٥٢] الحالة[١٤٤] المطلوبة، فما هي إلاّ الحالة التي يحصل فيها الإنزالُ؛ وهي حالةٌ سريعةُ الانقراضِ والانقضاء، كأنّها الآنُ الذي لا يَنقسِم. فثبت بما ذكرنا أنّ هاتين اللذّتين ضعيفتان[١٤٥] جدّاً.

وأمّا الآلام البدنيّة الحاصلة، فالأمر فيها بالعكس. وذلك لأنّ موضع اللذّتين ليس إلاّ العضوان المعيّنان؛ أمّا موضع الألم، فكلّ واحد من الأعضاء فهو قابلٌ لأعظم الآلام. فمنها الصداع القويّ، والشقيقة الشديدة[١٤٦]، ومنها أوجاع العين والأذن [س: ١٣٢أ] والسنّ، ومنها السرطانات الواقعة المهلكة في الأعضاء المختلفة، ومنها أوجاع القولنج، ومنها البواسير، ومنها أسر البول[١٤٧]، ومنها أوجاع الكِلية. فظهر[١٤٨] بما ذكرنا أنّ جميع الأعضاء مستعدّةٌ[١٤٩] لقبول هذه الآلام، وليس جميعُ الأعضاء قابلةً لحصول اللذّات.

وأيضاً، فهذه الآلام قاهرةٌ قويّةٌ مستعليةٌ. وقد تبلغ [م: ١١٦ب] في القوّة إلى حيث توجِب الموتَ. وأيضاً، فقد تدوم – والعياذ بالله — أيّاماً وليالي. وأمّا لذّات[١٥٠] الأكل والشرب، فهي سريعة الانقضاء والانقراض.

فثبت أنّ جانب المحن والآفات[١٥١] في هذه الآلام الجسمانيّة غالبةٌ على اللذّات

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[١٤٣] م: متعقّبة.

[١٤٤] م: الأحوال.

[١٤٥] س: هذين اللذتين ضعيفان.

[١٤٦] سقطت من م.

[١٤٧] س: ومنها عسر البول ومنها البواسير. م: ومنها أسر البول ومنها البواسير.

[١٤٨] س: وظهر.

[١٤٩] م: مشعرة.

[١٥٠] م: لذة.

[١٥١] س: والالافات.

الجسمانيّة. نعم، الغالب على الخلق هو السلامة من[١٥٢] هذه الآفات! إلاّ إنّ السلامة عنها[١٥٣] غيرٌ، وحصول اللذّة غيرٌ. ونحن ندّعي أنّ جانب الألم أقوى من جانب اللذّة في الكيفيّة والكمّيّة والمحلّ. أمّا[١٥٤] جانب السلامة، فإنّه أزيد من جانب الألم.

فثبت بما ذكرنا أنّ هذه اللذّات قليلةٌ مستحقَرةٌ بالنسبة إلى الآفات.

الوجه[١٥٥] السادس في بيان أنّ[١٥٦] هذه اللذّات حقيرةٌ جدّاً: وذلك أنّ[١٥٧] اللذّات الجسمانيّة المرغوب فيها كثيرةٌ جدّاً، والحاصل ها هنا[١٥٨] منها ليس إلاّ القليل القليل[١٥٩]؛ وذلك يوجِب التعبَ الشديد. أمّا بيان أنّ الموجِب لها كثيرٌ أن نقول: إنّ الإنسان يُبصِر بعينه جميعَ ما في هذا[١٦٠] العالم من المحسوسات[١٦١]؛ وإذا أبصر شيئاً، فقد يَميل طبعُه إليه؛ فيصير ذلك سبباً لاشتداد رغبته في تحصيله.

مثاله إذا رأى فرساً جواداً[١٦٢]، فإنّه كما رآه[١٦٣] مال طبعُه إليه. وإذا رأى ثوباً حسناً، مال طبعُه إليه. وكذلك القول في جميع مبصَرات هذا العالم. ومعلومٌ أنّ البصر عضوٌ [ل: ٢٥٣] دَوّارٌ على أكثر موجودات هذا العالم. وأمّا القوّة

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[١٥٢] م، س: عن.
[١٥٣] سقطت من م.
[١٥٤] س: واما.
[١٥٥] ل: والوجه.
[١٥٦] ساقطة من س.
[١٥٧] م: لأن.
[١٥٨] "ها هنا" ساقطة من س، م.
[١٥٩] ساقطة من ل.
[١٦٠] سقطت من م.
[١٦١] م: في العالم من المبصرات.
[١٦٢] ل: جودا.
[١٦٣] كذا في ل، م. "كما رآه" ساقطة من س.

السامعة، فكذلك؛ لأنّه[١٦٤] إذا سمع أنّ الرجل الفلانيّ فاز بالدولة والرفعة، مال طبعه إلى تحصيلها. فإذا لم يقدر على الفوز به، تأذّى وتألّم قلبُه. وإذا سمع بأنّ[١٦٥] الرجل الفلانيّ ذَكَره[١٦٦] بالسوء والقبيح، تألّم قلبُه.

وبالجملة، فالقلب [م: ١١٧أ] يجري مجرى مرآة منصوبة على جدار، وكان ذلك الجدار ممرّاً لأكثر موجودات[١٦٧] هذا العالم. فكلّما[١٦٨] مرّ به شيءٌ، ظهر[١٦٩] من ذلك الشيء فيه أثرٌ. فإن كان موافقاً له[١٧٠]، مال طبعُه إليه. وإن[١٧١] لم يقدر على تحصيله، تألّم قلبُه. وإن نفر طبعُه عنه، ولم يقدر على دفعه، تألّم قلبُه. فثبت بهذا الطريق أنّ قلبه لا بدّ وأن يكون مستغرقاً أبداً في الآلام والهموم والغموم. وأمّا الفرح، فذاك إنما يحصل إذا حصّل المطلوبَ ودَفَع [س: ١٣٢ب] المكروهَ. وذلك[١٧٢] قليلٌ قليلٌ، في جنب كثيرٍ كثيرٍ.

فثبت أنّ الغالب على أهل هذا العالم هو الغموم والهموم[١٧٣] والأحزان. وأمّا اللذّة والخير[١٧٤]، فقليلةٌ جداً. ومن المعلوم أنّ النادر في[١٧٥] جنب الراجح، كالمعدوم

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[١٦٤] سقطت من م.

[١٦٥] م: أن.

[١٦٦] ل: ذكر.

[١٦٧] م: الموجودات.

[١٦٨] م: وكلما.

[١٦٩] س: فيظهر.

[١٧٠] سقطت من م.

[١٧١] س، م: فان.

[١٧٢] س: وذاك.

[١٧٣] س، م: الهموم والغموم.

[١٧٤] ساقطة من س.

[١٧٥] "حكم" زائدة في ل.

بالنسبة إلى الموجود. فثبت أنّ الغالب على أحوال[١٧٦] هذا العالم إنما هو الشرور والآفات. والله أعلم[١٧٧].

القسم الثاني: الكلام في اللذّات الخياليّة، وهي لذّة الرئاسة والجاه[١٧٨]

واعلم أنّ الكلام في التنبيه على قبائحها[١٧٩] من وجهين. الأوّل[١٨٠] أن نبيّن أنها لا تحصل إلاّ بتحمّل المتاعب العظيمة والمشاقّ غير المتناهية[١٨١]. والثاني أن نبيّن أنها في نفسها[١٨٢] ليست من المطالب الشريفة العالية، بل من المطالب الخسيسة الواهية[١٨٣].

الفصل الأول: في بيان أنّ هذا المطلوب يمتنع خلوُّه عن[١٨٤] الآفات والمتاعب، وبيانه من وجوه.

الأوّل: أنّ كلّ أحدٍ يحبّ أن يكون هو الرئيس للغير، وأن يكون كلّ ما[١٨٥] سواه تحت قدرته وتحتاً[١٨٦] تصرّفه وحُكمه. وذلك لأنّ كون الإنسان قادراً على

[١٧٦] م: أهل.
[١٧٧] "والله أعلم" ساقطة من س.
[١٧٨] ساقطة من س، م.
[١٧٩] م: قبحها.
[١٨٠] م: أحدهما.
[١٨١] س، م: الغير المتناهية. و"الغير" سقطت من ل.
[١٨٢] ل: أنفسها.
[١٨٣] سقطت من س، م.
[١٨٤] م: من.
[١٨٥] م: من.
[١٨٦] سقطت من ل.

الغير، نافذَ التصرّف فيه، صفةُ كمال؛ وصفة الكمال محبوبةٌ لذاتها. وكونه[١٨٧] مقدوراً للغير، ومحلاًّ[١٨٨] لتصرّف الغيرٍ، صفةُ[١٨٩] [م: ١١٧ب] نقص؛ وصفة النقص مبغوضةٌ لذاتها. فثبت أنّ طبع[١٩٠] كلّ أحدٍ يحملُه على[١٩١] أن يكون هو الرئيس لغيره والمتصرّف[١٩٢] [ل: ٢٥٤] في غيره، وأن يمنع غيرَه من أن يكون رئيساً له[١٩٣] وحاكماً عليه. وإذا كان كذلك، فالساعي في تحصيل الرئاسة لذلك الإنسان المعيّن، ليس إلاّ ذلك الإنسان. وأمّا كلّ مَن سواه، فإنهم يسعون في إبطال تلك الرئاسة وفي إعدامها. وإذا كان كذلك، فذلك الإنسانُ الواحد هو الساعي في حصول تلك الرئاسة له[١٩٤]؛ وأمّا جميع الخلق من أهل المشرق والمغرب، فكلّهم يسعون في إبطالها ودفعها وإعدامها. وإذا كان كذلك، كان الساعي[١٩٥] في تحصيل هذا المطلوب في غاية القلّة، لأنّه لا أقلّ من الواحد؛ والساعي في إبطاله ودفعه في غاية الكثرة، لأنّه ثبت أنّ كلّ مَن سوى ذلك الواحد، فهو يدفع عن[١٩٦] تلك الرئاسة ويُبطِل ذلك التقدّمَ.

والمطلوب الذي يَقلُّ الساعي في تحصيله، ويَكثر الساعي في إبطاله، يكون صعبَ الحصول جدّاً. وكلّ ما كان كذلك، كان السعي[١٩٧] في طلبه منشأَ الغموم

[١٨٧] م: كونها.
[١٨٨] س: محلّلاً.
[١٨٩] سقطت من ل.
[١٩٠] سقطت من س.
[١٩١] سقطت من س.
[١٩٢] س، م: وهو المتصرف.
[١٩٣] سقطت من م.
[١٩٤] سقطت من س.
[١٩٥] في ل كلمة فوق السطر غير واضحة، كأنها "السعي".
[١٩٦] سقطت من ل، م.
[١٩٧] س: الساعي.

والهموم[١٩٨] والأحزان التي لا حدّ[١٩٩] لها، وكان صريح العقل مانعاً من طلبه، وحاكماً بوجوب الاحتراز عنه.

فإن قيل: "كيف تقول: "إنّ رئاسة الإنسان المعيّنِ لا يسعى في تحصيلها إلاّ ذلك الإنسانُ[٢٠٠] المعيّن"، ونحن نشاهد العالَمَ مِن الخلقِ يُعينون الرجلَ الواحد على طلبِ الرئاسة[٢٠١] لنفسه، ويبذلون الأرواحَ والأموال[٢٠٢] في تلك[٢٠٣] الإعانة؟"

فالجواب[٢٠٤]: إنّ أولئك الأعوان والأنصار إنما [س: ١٣٣أ] يكونون موصوفين بالإعانة والنصرة بشرط أمرين. أحدهما أن يكونوا آيسين عن طلب ذلك المنصب لأنفسهم. فإنهم متى تخيّلوا أنّه يمكنهم تحصيلُها لأنفسهم، تركوا الإعانةَ والنصرةَ، وصاروا من أشدّ الناس عداوةً لذلك الطالب. الثاني[٢٠٥] [م: ١١٨أ] أن يَتوسّلوا بتلك الإعانة والنصرة إلى تحصيل منفعةٍ لأنفسهم، بحيث لا يمكنهم تحصيلها إلاّ بتلك الواسطة. فعند اجتماع هذين الشرطين، تحصل الإعانةُ والنصرةُ. إلاّ إنّ[٢٠٦] عند التحقيق، يظهر أنهم ما سعوا إلاّ في[٢٠٧] تحصيل النفع لأنفسهم، وأنّ أحداً مِن الخلق لا يَسعى في تحصيل النفع لغيره، إلاّ بشرط أن تكون تلك[٢٠٨] الإعانة وسيلةً [ل: ٢٥٥] إلى حصول النفع له. وعند هذا يظهر ما قرّرناه.

الوجه الثاني في بيان مفاسد طلب الرئاسة: وهي أنّ الرئاسة عبارةٌ عن نفاذ

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[١٩٨] س: الهموم والغموم. م: منشأ للهموم والغموم.

[١٩٩] س: عدّ.

[٢٠٠] م: الواحد.

[٢٠١] م: طلبه.

[٢٠٢] س: الاموال والارواح.

[٢٠٣] ل: ذلك.

[٢٠٤] س: الجواب. م: والجواب.

[٢٠٥] م: والثاني.

[٢٠٦] سقطت من س.

[٢٠٧] سقطت من س.

[٢٠٨] سقطت من م.

قدرته على الغير؛ والقدرة الموصوفة بهذه الصفة صفةُ كمال؛ وصفة الكمال محبوبةٌ لذاتها؛ فهذه الصفة محبوبةٌ لذاتها[٢٠٩]. إلاّ إنّ حبّ الشيء والرغبة فيه والحرص على تحصيله مشروطٌ بالشعور بحقيقته والوقوف على ماهيّته.

إذا عرفتَ هذا، فنقول: مَن لم يتّفق له الفوزُ بمنصب الرئاسة والإمارة، كان كالغافل[٢١٠] عن ما فيها من اللذّة والبهجة والسعادة؛ فكان قليلَ الرغبة فيها، لعدم وقوفه على حقيقتها. فإذا ذاقها، ووقف[٢١١] على ماهيتها[٢١٢]، استطابها. وإذا استطابها[٢١٣]، ازداد ميلُه إليها، وقويت رغبتُه فيها؛ ويصير أشدّ عشقاً وأعظم حرصاً ممّا كان قبل هذه الحالة.

فثبت أنّ السعي في تحصيل الرئاسة والفوز بها لا يفيد زوالَ ألم الطلب والحرص، بل يقوّي ذلك الألَم ويُكَمّل ذلك الحرصَ. وكلّما كان فوزه بدرجات الرئاسة والإمارة أكثر، كان التذاذُه بها أقوى. وإذا كان كذلك، كان حرصه على الازدياد[٢١٤] منها أكمل وأقوى؛ فكان[٢١٥] الألم الحاصل بسبب ذلك الطلب القويّ أقوى.

فالحاصل[٢١٦] [م: ١١٨ب] أنّ الساعي في تحصيل الرئاسة إنما يسعى لدفع ألم الحرص والطلب. وذلك باطلٌ؛ لأنه إن[٢١٧] لم يفُز بمطلوبه، كان البلاءُ الحاصل بسبب الحرمان بعد الطلب الكامل أشدّ. وإن فاز بمطلوبه، كان التذاذه به[٢١٨]

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[٢٠٩] "فهذه الصفة محبوبة لذاتها" سقطت من ل.

[٢١٠] س: الغافل.

[٢١١] سقطت من س.

[٢١٢] ل: ماهيته.

[٢١٣] "وإذا استطابها" ساقطة من س.

[٢١٤] س: ازدياد.

[٢١٥] م: وكان.

[٢١٦] ل: والحاصل.

[٢١٧] ل: اذا.

[٢١٨] س: بها.

أقوى؛ فكان حرصه[٢١٩] على طلب الأزيد أقوى؛ فكان البلاء الحاصل بسبب ذلك الحرص أقوى[٢٢٠].

فثبت أنّ حصول الرئاسة لا يُزيل ألَمَ الطلب والحرص، بل يقوّيه ويزيد فيه. ولمّا كان لا نهاية[٢٢١] لمراتب القدرة، فكذلك[٢٢٢] لا نهاية لمراتب الآلام المتولّدة من الحرص. وإذا عَرف العاقلُ هذا المعنى، وجب عليه أن لا يُقدِم على الطلب من أوّل الأمر؛ كما قيل:

رأى الأمرَ يُفضي إلى آخِرٍ فصَيّر[٢٢٣] آخِرَه أوّلا[٢٢٤]

[س: ١٣٣ب] **الوجه الثالث** في بيان مقابح[٢٢٥] طلبِ الرئاسة. وذلك لأنّ كون الإنسان خادماً لغيره[٢٢٦] مكروهٌ بالذات، ومحبوبٌ بالعرَض المفارِق. وما كان كذلك، فإنّه لا يكون دائماً ولا أكثريّاً. وما كان كذلك امتنع الالتذاذُ [ل: ٢٥٦] به. أمّا بيان أنّه مكروهٌ بالذات، فلأنّ كون الإنسان خادماً لغيره[٢٢٧] نقصٌ؛ والنقص مكروهٌ بالذات ضرورةً[٢٢٨]. وأمّا أنّه محبوبٌ بالعرَض[٢٢٩]، فلأنّه

[٢١٩] س: جهته؟

[٢٢٠] "فكان البلاء الحاصل بسبب ذلك الحرص أقوى" سقطت من م.

[٢٢١] ل: ولا نهاية.

[٢٢٢] ل: فلذلك.

[٢٢٣] م: يصير.

[٢٢٤] من البحر المتقارب. والبيت لمحمودٍ الورّاق (ت ٢٣٠/٨٤٠) (ديوان الورّاق، ٢٢٨، بلفظ "رأى الهمّ").

[٢٢٥] س: مقبح.

[٢٢٦] س، م: للغير.

[٢٢٧] س، م: للغير.

[٢٢٨] سقطت من ل، س.

[٢٢٩] ل: بالغرض.

إنما يَرضى بهذه الحالة إذا توسّل بخدمة الغير إلى تحصيل منفعة لنفسه. وهذه الحالة صفةٌ عرَضيّةٌ. وأمّا أنّ هذه الحالة العرَضيّة من الأعراض المفارِقة السريعة الزوال، فلأنّ كون الإنسان بحيث تكون خدمته[٢٣٠] سبباً لانتفاع الخادم به أمرٌ ليس من لوازم ذاته، بل هو عرَضٌ مفارِقٌ سريع الزوال. فثبت أنّ كون الإنسان خادماً للغير مكروهٌ بالذات، ومحبوبٌ بالعرَض المفارق.

وأمّا بيان أنّ ما كان كذلك، فإنّه لا[٢٣١] يكون دائماً ولا أكثريّاً، وذلك لأنّ المقتضي للنفرة ذاتيٌّ، والمقتضي للرغبة[٢٣٢] مفارِقٌ سريع الزوال؛ فيكون جانب النفرة راجحاً على [م: ١١٩أ] جانب الرغبة. فامتنع كون هذه الخدمة دائمةً أو[٢٣٣] أكثريّةً. فعند زوالها، يتألّم قلبُ المخدوم ويتأذّى طبعُه. فثبت أنّ الغالب على من يحاول كونه مخدوماً لغيره تألّمُ القلب وتوحّشُ النفس.

الوجه الرابع في بيان مقابح طلب الرئاسة: إنّ الشيء كلّما كان ألذّ، كانت الرغبة في تحصيله[٢٣٤] أشدّ، وكانت الرغبة في إزالة العوائق عنه[٢٣٥] أشدّ. وحصول الرئاسة للغير من أشدّ الأشياء عائقاً عن حصولها لي[٢٣٦]؛ فكانت الرغبة في إبطال ذلك العائق أعظمَ الرغبات. فثبت أنّ كلّ من طمع[٢٣٧] في تحصيل الرئاسة، فقد رغّب الناسَ في قتله[٢٣٨]، وقوّى ميلَهم إلى إفنائه وإبطاله. ومَن شاهد أحوالَ الأمراء والملوك، عَرَف أنّ الأمر على القانون الذي ذكرنا[٢٣٩]. لكن من المعلوم أن الحياة

[٢٣٠] ساقطة من س.
[٢٣١] سقطت من طرف الصفحة في ل.
[٢٣٢] س: الرغبة.
[٢٣٣] س، م: و.
[٢٣٤] جميع الأصول: تحصيلها.
[٢٣٥] جميع الأصول: عنها.
[٢٣٦] سقطت من م.
[٢٣٧] م: رغب.
[٢٣٨] ل: فعله.
[٢٣٩] س: ذكرناه.

أصلٌ[٢٤٠] لجميع النعم، والرئاسة فضيلةٌ زائدةٌ. فلمّا كان السعي في طلب هذه الفضيلة الزائدة يوجِب[٢٤١] السعيَ في إبطال[٢٤٢] الأصل، كان باطلاً؛ لأنّ كلّ فرعٍ أفضى إلى إبطال الأصل كان باطلاً[٢٤٣].

الوجه الخامس في بيان مقابح هذا الباب[٢٤٤] أنّ الإنسان إمّا أن يكون أفضل من غيره، أو يكون[٢٤٥] مساوياً لغيره، أو يكون[٢٤٦] أقلَّ حالاً من غيره. فإن كان أفضل من غيره[٢٤٧]، فكونه أفضل من غيره حالةٌ مكروهةٌ لذلك الغير. فذلك المرجوح يسعى بكلّ ما يقدر عليه في إبطال تلك الفضيلة عن الراجح. [ل: ٢٥٧] فإن كان ذلك الرجحان لصفة قابلة للزوال – مَثَلُه[٢٤٨] كونُه مَلكاً نافذَ الحُكم والسلطنة – فالأعداء يسعون في إبطالها وإزالتها بأقصى ما يقدرون عليه. وإن كان ذلك الرجحان بصفة لا يمكن إزالتها، مثلَ العلم، فها هنا للأعداء طريقان. أحدهما [س: ١٣٤أ] أنهم إن أمكنهم إخفاءُ تلك [م: ١١٩ب] الفضيلة بطريقٍ من الطرق، فعلوه. وذلك بإلقاء الشبهات في كلامه، وتشويش دلائله. والثاني أنهم إن عجزوا عنه، نسبوه إلى أنواعٍ من القبائح، ليصير اتصافُه بتلك[٢٤٩]

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[٢٤٠] ساقطة من س.

[٢٤١] س: وجب.

[٢٤٢] ل: يوجب الإبطال في. وقبل "الإبطال" علامة إحالة إلى تصحيح في الهامش؛ لكنّه سقط مع الترميم.

[٢٤٣] "لأنّ كلّ فرعٍ أفضى إلى إبطال الأصل كان باطلاً" سقطت من س.

[٢٤٤] س: هذه البابِ. وفي هامش س صُوّبت "الباب" بـــ "اللذات".

[٢٤٥] سقطت من ل.

[٢٤٦] س، م: كان. وسقطت من ل.

[٢٤٧] "فإن كان أفضل من غيره" ساقطة من س.

[٢٤٨] س، م: بصفة قابلة الزوال مثل.

[٢٤٩] ل: بذلك.

القبائح والفضائح مانعاً من حصول صفة الكمال له. والتجربة تدلّ على أنّ[٢٥٠] الرجل الكامل لا بدّ وأن يكون[٢٥١] مبتلىً بهذه الأحوال.

وأمّا إذا[٢٥٢] كان مساوياً لغيره، فالوحدانيّة صفة كمال؛ وصفة الكمال محبوبةٌ لذاتها. والشركة صفة نقص؛ وصفة النقص مكروهةٌ لذاتها[٢٥٣]. وإذا ثبت هذا، فالشركاء يسعون بأقصى الوجوه في إبطال الشركة، وإظهار أنّه أفضل وأكمل من ذلك الشخص الذي يُعتقَد فيه كونه شريكاً له. وذلك السعي يكون[٢٥٤] تارةً بإلقاء الشبهات في كونه موصوفاً بتلك الفضيلة التي فيها وقعت الشركة، وتارةً بادعاء كونه موصوفاً بصفة[٢٥٥] من صفات القبح والنقصان؛ ليصير[٢٥٦] ذلك مانعاً من كون ذلك الغير شريكاً له في الفضيلة.

وأمّا إذا كان أدونَ حالاً من غيره، فهذا الشخص لا يُلتفَت إليه ولا يُقام له وزنٌ البتّة، بل يجري مجرى الأشياء الخسيسة ولا يخاطَب إلاّ[٢٥٧] بالتحقير والإهانة. بل الأطباء قالوا: "إنّه متى صار عضوٌ من الأعضاء ضعيفاً، فإنّ الأعضاء القويّة تُرسِل إليه جميعَ الفضلات". وبالجملة، فاستيلاء القويّ على الضعيف أمرٌ[٢٥٨] من لوازم الوجود.

فثبت أنّ حال[٢٥٩] الإنسان لا يخلو من هذه الأقسام[٢٦٠] الثلاثة؛ وهي كونه

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[٢٥٠] سقطت من س.
[٢٥١] "وأن يكون" سقطت من س.
[٢٥٢] م: إن.
[٢٥٣] م: والنقص مكروه لذاته.
[٢٥٤] سقطت من ل، س.
[٢٥٥] ل: صفة.
[٢٥٦] ل: فيصير.
[٢٥٧] سقطت من ل.
[٢٥٨] سقطت من ل.
[٢٥٩] م: كمال.
[٢٦٠] س: الاشياء.

زائداً، أو ناقصاً، أو مساوياً[٢٦١]. وثبت أنّ[٢٦٢] على[٢٦٣] جميع التقديرات لا يَنفكّ عن[٢٦٤] موجبات الغموم والأحزان. فثبت أنّ هذه الحياة الجَسمانيّة لا تنفكّ[٢٦٥] البتّة[٢٦٦] عن الحزن والغمّ وألم القلب.

الوجه السادس [م: ١٢٠أ] في بيان[٢٦٧] مقابح هذه الحياة الجسمانيّة أنّ الإنسان إمّا أن يكون في الألم، أو في اللذّة، أو يكون[٢٦٨] خالياً عنهما. فإن كان في الألم والمضرّة، فلا شك أنّه حالةٌ منفّرةٌ مكروهةٌ. وإن كان في الخير وفي[٢٦٩] اللذّة، فلا شكّ أنّه عالمٌ بأنّ أحوال هذه الدنيا غير باقية، بل هي [ل: ٢٥٨] سريعة الزوال، مشرفةٌ[٢٧٠] على الانقراض والانقضاء. فكلّما كانت الحالة التي يكون الإنسان فيها[٢٧١] ألذّ وأطيب، كان خوف الزوال أشدّ إيلاماً للقلب وأعظم تأثيراً في هذا المعنى. فعلى هذا، كلّما كانت الحالة[٢٧٢] الحاصلة ألذّ وأبهج، كانت الآلام الحاصلة بسبب خوف[٢٧٣] الزوال أقوى وأكمل[٢٧٤]. وأمّا إن كان الإنسان خالياً

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[٢٦١] ل: مسايا. س: وناقصا ومساويا.
[٢٦٢] سقطت من س.
[٢٦٣] سقطت من ل.
[٢٦٤] م: من.
[٢٦٥] "عن موجبات الغموم والأحزان فثبت أن هذه الحياة الجسمانية لا تنفك" سقطت من س.
[٢٦٦] سقطت من م.
[٢٦٧] سقطت من ل.
[٢٦٨] سقطت من ل.
[٢٦٩] "في" سقطت من م.
[٢٧٠] س: مشروعة.
[٢٧١] سقطت من س.
[٢٧٢] س، م: اللذة.
[٢٧٣] سقطت من ل.
[٢٧٤] سقطت من م.

عن الألم واللذّة، فإنّه يكون كالمعطّل الباطل. وهذه الحالة منفّرةٌ جدّاً مكروهةٌ جدّاً[٢٧٥]. وإذا كان كذلك، ثبت[٢٧٦] أنّ هذا القسم ممتنع الحصول. فظهر[٢٧٧] أنّ الإنسان لا يخلو قطّ من[٢٧٨] الغموم والهموم والأحزان.

الوجه [س: ١٣٤ب] **السابع** أنّ شعور الإنسان بالكيفيّات المحسوسة المخصوصة[٢٧٩] إنما يكون حال حدوثها؛ أمّا[٢٨٠] حال بقائها فإنه لا يبقى الشعورُ بها[٢٨١]. ولهذا السبب قالوا: "إنّ الحرارة الحاصلة من حمّى الدقّ[٢٨٢] أقوى وأكمل من الحرارة الحاصلة من حمّى الغبّ[٢٨٣] بكثيرٍ؛ إلاّ إنّ الحرارة الدقّيّة[٢٨٤] غير مشعورٍ بها، لأجل أنها استقرّت وبقيت. وأمّا الحرارة الحادثة[٢٨٥] من حمّى الغبّ، فإنها غير مستقرّة، بل حادثةٌ؛ فلا جرم حصل الشعورُ بها."

إذا عرفت هذا فنقول: اللذّات الحاصلة من هذه المحسوسات لا تحصل إلاّ حالَ حصول الشعور بها؛ وحالُ حصول الشعور بها[٢٨٦] ليس إلاّ في أوّل[٢٨٧] حدوثها. ينتج أنّ الالتذاذَ بهذه المحسوسات لا يحصل إلاّ في أوّل حال الحدوث[٢٨٨]. [م:

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[٢٧٥] ل: منفرة جداً مكروه جداً. س: منفرة ومكروهة جداً.

[٢٧٦] م: فثبت.

[٢٧٧] س، م: وظهر.

[٢٧٨] س: عن. ل: قطّ لا يخلو من.

[٢٧٩] سقطت من س، م.

[٢٨٠] سقطت من س.

[٢٨١] م: بقائها لا شعور بها.

[٢٨٢] راجع: ابن سينا، القانون، ٣، ٥٨.

[٢٨٣] راجع: ابن سينا، القانون، ٣، ٧٤.

[٢٨٤] ل: الدقيقة.

[٢٨٥] س: الحاصلة.

[٢٨٦] "وحال حصول الشعور بها" ساقطة من س.

[٢٨٧] م: حال.

[٢٨٨] زيادة في س: أما في حال الحدوث.

١٢٠ب] و[٢٨٩] أمّا في حال الدوام والبقاء، فإنّه لا يحصل الشعورُ بها؛ فلا جرم لا يحصل الالتذاذُ بها. و[٢٩٠] إذا لم يحصل الالتذاذ بها، والطبع طالبٌ للالتذاذ[٢٩١]، فحينئذٍ يصير طالباً لشيءٍ آخر. فعلى هذا، لو أنّ الإنسان ملَكَ جميع خزائن[٢٩٢] السماوات والأرض، فالتذاذه[٢٩٣] بها لا يكون إلاّ في حال حدوثها. ثمّ عند الفراغ منها[٢٩٤]، يطلب شيئاً آخر، ويحاول تحصيل الزيادة. وبسبب ذلك الطلب والحرص يحصل في قلبه ألمُ الشوق ومضَرّةُ الطلب. فثبت أنّ هذا[٢٩٥] البلاء ممّا لا سبيل إلى دفعه البتّة.

و[٢٩٦] **الوجه الثامن** أنّ الإنسان إذا فتح باب الحرص على نفسه، فقد ينتهي ذلك إلى أن يصير طالباً للجمع بين الضدّين. ومثاله أنّ القدرة صفة كمال؛ وصفة الكمال محبوبةٌ بالذات. والاستغناء عن الغير صفة الكمال؛ [ل: ٢٥٩] فتكون محبوبةً بالذات[٢٩٧].

إذا عرفت هذا، فنقول: إنّ الرجل إذا مال طبعه إلى السخاوة والجود والمروءة[٢٩٨]، فهذه السخاوة من حيث أنّها هي[٢٩٩] تدلّ على أنّ قلبه غير ملتفت إلى حبّ المال، ولا يبالي بوجوده وعدمه؛ فإنّها[٣٠٠] مطلوبةٌ. [أمّا] من حيث أنّها

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[٢٨٩] سقطت من س، م.

[٢٩٠] سقطت من س.

[٢٩١] ل، م: الالتذاذ.

[٢٩٢] س، م: خزائن جميع.

[٢٩٣] ل: فالالتذاذ.

[٢٩٤] م: عنها.

[٢٩٥] ل: هذه.

[٢٩٦] سقطت في س، م.

[٢٩٧] ل: للذات.

[٢٩٨] سقطت من م. س: والمودة.

[٢٩٩] سقطت من س، م.

[٣٠٠] م: كأنّها.

تقتضي خروجَ المال عن يده[٣٠١]، وخروج المال عن اليد يوجب نقصاناً في القدرة الحاصلة بسبب المال، والنقصان في القدرة مكروهٌ، صارت السخاوة من هذه الجهة مكروهةً منفرةً. وجميع الخلق موصوفون بهذه البليّة. فلأجل[٣٠٢] ميل الطبع إلى حصول المدح والثناء والتعظيم، يحبّون الجودَ والسخاوةَ. ولأجل فوت القدرة الحاصلة بسبب ذلك المال، يبغضونه. فلهذا السبب، بقي كلّ الخلق في موقف المعارضة والترجيح. فمنهم مَن ترجّح عنده ذلك الجانب، فيبذل المال. ومنهم من ترجّح عنده الجانبُ الثاني، [م: ١٢١أ] فيمنع. ومنهم من بلغ في الجهالة والحماقة[٣٠٣] إلى حيث يريد الجمعَ بين الوجهين؛ فيَعد الناسَ بالجود والسخاوة والمروءة[٣٠٤] والكرم، طمعاً منهم[٣٠٥] في أنّه ربما فاز لهذا[٣٠٦] المعنى بالمدح والثناء؛ ثمّ إنّه عند حضور الوقت [س: ١٣٥أ] لا يفي به. فحينئذٍ، يقع في أشدّ أنواع القبائح والفضائح[٣٠٧]. وإذا تأمّلتَ في أحوال أهل الدنيا، علمتَ أنّهم بأسرهم داخلون تحت البلاء المتولِّد من هذه القضيّة، إمّا في الكثير منه، أو[٣٠٨] في[٣٠٩] القليل.

الوجه التاسع أنّ[٣١٠] الإنسان إمّا أن يسدّ باب الإنعام على الغير، ويسدّ بابَ إيصال[٣١١] الخير إلى الغير؛ وإمّا أن لا يسدّ هذا الباب، بل قد[٣١٢] يُقدم على هذا

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[٣٠١] "ولا يبالي بوجوده وعدمه، فإنها مطلوبة من حيث أنها تقتضي خروج المال عن يده" سقطت من س.
[٣٠٢] م: ولأجل.
[٣٠٣] سقطت من م.
[٣٠٤] سقطت من ل، س.
[٣٠٥] س، م: منه.
[٣٠٦] ل: بهذا.
[٣٠٧] سقطت من س. ل: القبائح الفضائح.
[٣٠٨] س: وإمّا.
[٣٠٩] سقطت من م.
[٣١٠] سقطت من س.
[٣١١] ل: إفضال. س: اتصال.
[٣١٢] سقطت من م.

العمل[٣١٣]. وفي كلّ واحد من الطرفين آفاتٌ كثيرةٌ. أمّا[٣١٤] القسم الأوّل، وهو أن يسدّ هذا الباب بالكلّيّة، فها هنا فيه[٣١٥] آفاتٌ. أوّلها[٣١٦]، أنّ كلّ مَن اشتُهر عند الناس بالبعد عن[٣١٧] الخير والنفع أبغضوه؛ وكلّ من صار بغيضاً عند الكلّ، فوصول[٣١٨] الآفة إليه أسرع من انحدار السيل من المكان العالي. وثانيها، وهو أنّ الناس إذا عرفوا منه تلك الصفة، مقتوه وأبغضوه ولم يلتفتوا إليه؛ وكلّ مَن عَلِم من الناس أنهم إنما ينظرون إليه بعين المقت والإزراء، فإنّه يضيق قلبه وتتألّم روحُه. وثالثها أنّه إذا لم يظهر منه خيرٌ، صار [ل: ٢٦٠] كالجماد والعدم[٣١٩]. وهذه حالةٌ منفّرةٌ جدّاً.

وأمّا القسم الثاني — وهو أن يفتح بابَ إيصال الخير إلى الغير — فهذا فيه آفاتٌ. أحداها أنّ إيصال الخير إلى الكلّ[٣٢٠] محالٌ؛ [م: ١٢١ب] فلا بدّ من إيصاله إلى البعض[٣٢١] دون البعض. وذلك يصير سبباً للعداوة الشديدة. فإنّه يقال له: "لِمَ[٣٢٢] أوصلتَ الخيرَ إلى فلان، ومنعتني منه؟" وثانيها أنّ الذي أوصل إليه الخيرَ[٣٢٣] مرّةً يلتذّ بذلك الخير؛ والالتذاذ سببٌ للطلب؛ فيبقى أبداً طامعاً في ذلك الرجل. وإيصال الخير إليه في كلّ حينٍ وساعةٍ متعذّرٌ؛ فيصير ذلك سبباً للعداوة الشديدة.

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[٣١٣] م: الفعل.
[٣١٤] س: واما.
[٣١٥] ل: منه.
[٣١٦] س: فاوّلها.
[٣١٧] س: من.
[٣١٨] س: فوصل.
[٣١٩] س، م: وكالعدم.
[٣٢٠] س: كل.
[٣٢١] ل: بالبعض.
[٣٢٢] سقطت من ل.
[٣٢٣] س: الخير اليه. م: وصل الخير إليه.

ولهذا[٣٢٤] قيل: "اتّقِ شرَّ مَن أحسنتَ إليه". وثالثها أنّ المقدار الذي وصل إليه من الخير يصير معتاداً مألوفاً، ويصير كالأمر المستحَقّ. فيقع في قلبه طلبُ الزيادة عليه. وربما تعذّرت الزيادة عليه[٣٢٥]؛ فيصير ذلك سبباً قوياً في العداوة. فثبت أنّ على[٣٢٦] كلا التقديرين - أعني سدّ باب[٣٢٧] الخيرات وفتحها — لا يَسلم الإنسانُ من[٣٢٨] الضرر.

الوجه العاشر في مقابح هذه الحياة الجسمانيّة: و[٣٢٩] هو أنّ الإنسان إمّا أن يفرّ عن جميع الخلق ويعتزل عنهم، وإمّا أن يخالطهم ويصاحبهم. وعلى كلا التقديرين، فالضرر لازمٌ. أمّا القسم الأوّل، وهو الفرار عن الخلق والعزلة[٣٣٠] عنهم، فالضرر فيه لازمٌ. وذلك لأنّ الإنسان خُلِق مدنيّاً بالطبع؛ وما لم يجتمع الجمعُ العظيم، فإنّ مصالحه لا تنتظمُ. فإذا تفرّد، اختلّت مصالحُه. فإن صبر عليها، صار كالبهيمة الوحشيّة، وخرج عن الطباع البشريّة. وأيضاً، [س: ١٣٥ب] فإنّ الإنسان كما ينتفع في المنافع الحسّيّة بأهل المدينة، فكذلك ينتفع بهم في المنافع العقليّة. فإنّه إذا كان في المدينة الكبيرة، ويرى أصنافَ الناس، [م: ١٢٢أ] ويسمع من الخلق أنّهم يمدحون البعضَ بما فيهم من الصفات الحميدة، ويذمّون الباقين[٣٣١] بما فيهم من الصفات الخسيسة[٣٣٢]، دعته تلك الأحوال إلى الرغبة في تحصيل الصفات الحميدة والرهبة من[٣٣٣] الصفات الذميمة. فبهذا الطريق، يصير إنساناً كاملاً فاضلاً. أمّا إذا

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[٣٢٤] س: فلهذا.
[٣٢٥] سقطت من س، م.
[٣٢٦] سقطت من ل.
[٣٢٧] م: باب سد.
[٣٢٨] س، م: عن.
[٣٢٩] سقطت من م.
[٣٣٠] س: العزل.
[٣٣١] س: البعض.
[٣٣٢] م: الذميمة.
[٣٣٣] س، م: عن.

خرج من[٣٣٤] المدينة، وجلس في مفازةٍ خالية، بقي خالياً عن هذا النفع. فثبت أنّ العزلة والخلوة توجب الحرمانَ عن [ل: ٢٦١] المنافع الحسّيّة والمنافع العقليّة.

وأمّا القسم الثاني، وهو المخالطة مع الخلق، فهذا القسم أيضاً فيه[٣٣٥] أنواعٌ من الآفات. إحداها أنّ حبّ الكمال لازمٌ للذات[٣٣٦]. وإذا كان كذلك، كان[٣٣٧] إظهار الكمال محبوباً بالذات. وإذا كان كذلك، فربما كان الخالي عن[٣٣٨] الكمال يريد إظهارَ الكمال؛ وذلك هو الكذب. فيصير هذا المعنى حاملاً له على الكذب. إلاّ إنّ الكذب إنما[٣٣٩] يُقدِم الرجلُ عليه مع الغير؛ أمّا مع نفسه وحده، فإنّه لا يكذب. فالكذب والغيبة والنميمة والتكبّر والاستهزاء أحوالٌ لا تحصل إلاّ عند المخالطة مع الغير[٣٤٠]؛ أمّا إذا كان الإنسان منفرداً بنفسه، غير مخالطٍ[٣٤١] لغيره، فإنّ شيئاً منها لا يحصل البتّة.

وثانيها أنّ السهو[٣٤٢] والنسيان غالبان على الإنسان. فالرجل لا يمكنه إخلاءُ جميع أفعاله وأقواله عمّا لا ينبغي. فإذا خالطه قومٌ، فهم يعدُّون عليه معايبَه[٣٤٣]، ويخفون مناقبَه. فإذا[٣٤٤] تغيّروا عليه لبعض الأسباب المتقدّمة، جَبَهوه[٣٤٥] بما التقطوا

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[٣٣٤] س، م: عن.

[٣٣٥] سقطت من س.

[٣٣٦] س: اللذات.

[٣٣٧] "كذلك كان" سقطت من ل. وصحّحت بالهامش. لكن التصحيح سقط من طرف الصفحة مع الترميم.

[٣٣٨] س: من.

[٣٣٩] ل: ربما.

[٣٤٠] ل: للغير.

[٣٤١] س: مخالطة.

[٣٤٢] س: السهر.

[٣٤٣] ل: فإذا حالفه قوم فيهم يعرفون معايبه.

[٣٤٤] م: إذا.

[٣٤٥] م: وجبهوه. وجَبَهَ فلاناً، أي استقبله بالمكروه.

من أفعاله وأقواله من المعايب. وربما[٣٤٦] قصدوا إيذاءه وقتله[٣٤٧] لبعض تلك الأسباب.

وثالثها أنّ لكلّ واحد من الناس خُلُقاً بعينه [م: ١٢٢ب] وطبعاً بعينه؛ فقبيحُ هذا حَسَنٌ لذاك[٣٤٨]، وبالعكس. وإذا كان كذلك، فطول المخالطة تورِث النفرةَ والعداوة والبغض[٣٤٩]. وأيضاً، طول المخالطة تفيد الوقوفَ على أسباب الخير والشرّ. وإذا كان كذلك، فالوقوف على جملة الأحوال يفيد القدرة على القصد بالشرّ والإيذاء. والنفرة الحاصلة بسبب طول المخالطة تُقوِّي تلك الحالة[٣٥٠]. فلهذا السبب، كان الشرّ الحاصل من الأقارب والمصاحبين[٣٥١] أعظم من الشرّ الحاصل من الأجانب والأباعد.

و[٣٥٢] **الوجه الحادي عشر** أنّ الإنسان إمّا أن يعيش في الدنيا خالياً عن الزوجة والولد، أو مع حصولهما[٣٥٣]. وكلّ واحد من هذين[٣٥٤] القسمين سببٌ لحصول الآفات والبليّات. أمّا القسم [س: ١٣٦أ] الأوّل — وهو البقاء بدون[٣٥٥] الزوجة والولد — فهذا يوجب أنواعاً من البلاء. لأنّ، على هذا التقدير، إمّا أن يخدم الإنسانُ نفسَه بنفسه، وإمّا أن يستخدم غيره. أمّا الأول [ل: ٢٦٢] فهو يفيد الكدَّ والعناء والبلاء؛ وذلك ظاهرٌ بعد الاستقراء[٣٥٦]. وأمّا إن استخدم غيرَه،

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[٣٤٦] ل: وانما.

[٣٤٧] سقطت من ل.

[٣٤٨] س: لذلك.

[٣٤٩] س، م: البغضة.

[٣٥٠] "تقوي تلك الحالة" سقطت من م.

[٣٥١] ل: غير واضحة.

[٣٥٢] سقطت في س، م.

[٣٥٣] ل: حصولها.

[٣٥٤] سقطت من م.

[٣٥٥] م: دون.

[٣٥٦] س: الاستقرار.

كانوا[٣٥٧] لا محالة أجانب منه، فلا يكون لهم عليه شفقةٌ، ولا يهتمّون بإصلاح حاله. وأمّا القسم الثاني، وهو البقاء مع الزوجة والولد، فهذا[٣٥٨] يفتح عليه باباً من البلاء لا آخر له. وذلك لأنّه يحتاج إلى تحصيل مصالح الزوجة والولد، وتحصيل كلّ[٣٥٩] ما يطلبونه من الطيّبات واللذّات. ثمّ إنّ الولد إن كان جيّداً، كان خوفُ موته ينغّص كلّ[٣٦٠] الطيّبات واللذّات[٣٦١]. وإن كان[٣٦٢] رديئاً، كان تألّمُ القلب عند حياته يزيد على كلّ الآلام والآفات. ولذلك لمّا رأى عليٌّ — رضي الله عنه[٣٦٣] — رجلاً ومعه ولده، فقال: "لا تحبّه! فإنّه إن عاش كدّك، [م: ١٢٣أ] وإن مات هدّك."

الوجه الثاني عشر في بيان مقابح هذه الحياة أن نقول: هذه الحياة، هل هي طيّبةٌ[٣٦٤] لذيذةٌ في نفسها، أو ليست كذلك؟ والقسم الأول باطلٌ. لأنّ الشيء المستطاب المشتهى اللذيذ كلّما كانت مشاهدته أكثر، كان الالتذاذ[٣٦٥] به أقوى وأكمل؛ فكان يجب أن يكون الإنسان الفارغ عن[٣٦٦] كلّ الأعمال والأقوال، المراقِب لمرور الساعات والآنات[٣٦٧] عليه حال كونه حيّاً، يَعظُمُ التذاذُه بذلك[٣٦٨]؛

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[٣٥٧] ل: وكان.

[٣٥٨] م: وهذا.

[٣٥٩] م: كمال.

[٣٦٠] م: جميع. وفوق السطر في ل: لأسباب.

[٣٦١] سقطت من س، م.

[٣٦٢] زيادة في م: نعوذ بالله.

[٣٦٣] س: علي بن ابي طالب. م: علي بن أبي طالب كرم الله وجهه.

[٣٦٤] سقطت من س.

[٣٦٥] س: التذاذه.

[٣٦٦] س: على.

[٣٦٧] م: والأوقات.

[٣٦٨] م: لذلك.

لأنّ[٣٦٩]، على هذا التقدير، فهو يشاهد اللذيذَ المشتهَى. ومعلومٌ أنّ ذلك باطلٌ؛ لأنّ المعطَّل عن كلّ الأعمال يضيق[٣٧٠] قلبُه، ولا يمكنه تحمّلُ ذلك. ولذلك، فإنّ الملوك يشغلون[٣٧١] أنفسهم بالصيد وبالنرد وبالشطرنج[٣٧٢] وبسماع الخرافات من الحكايات[٣٧٣]، كلّ ذلك فراراً عن كونه معطّلاً عن مزاولة[٣٧٤] الأعمال.

وأمّا القسم الثاني — وهو أن[٣٧٥] يُقال: هذه الحياة في نفسها غير طيّبة ولا لذيذة — فنقول: إن[٣٧٦] كان الأمر كذلك، فما السبب في أنّ كلّ حيوانٍ يكره الموتَ؛ و[٣٧٧] إذا تخيّل نزولَ الموتِ به، دَفَعه على أقوى الوجوه، وفرّ منه على أعظم الوجوه؟ فهذا المعنى أيضاً حالةٌ عجيبةٌ، لا بدّ من التأمّل فيه.

الوجه الثالث عشر في مقابح هذه الحياة أن نقول: هذا الإنسان إمّا أن يكون رئيساً على الغير، أو لا يكون. وفي كلّ واحد من القسمين أنواعٌ من الآفات. أمّا القسم الأوّل — وهو أن يكون رئيساً — فنقول: الرئاسة إنما [ل: ٢٦٣] تكون لذيذةً إذا كان أحوال الخدم واقعةً على وفق إرادة الرئيس. و[٣٧٨] كلّما كان عدد الخدم أكثر، كانت إرادات[٣٧٩] الرئيس أكثر. وكلّما كانت الإرادات[٣٨٠] أكثر،

[٣٦٩] ل: "لأن" مكررة.

[٣٧٠] س: الضيق.

[٣٧١] س: يستعملون.

[٣٧٢] س، م: والنرد والشطرنج.

[٣٧٣] "من الحكايات" سقطت من ل. س: عن الحكايات.

[٣٧٤] ساقطة من س، م.

[٣٧٥] سقطت من س.

[٣٧٦] س: فان.

[٣٧٧] سقطت من س.

[٣٧٨] سقطت من س.

[٣٧٩] ل: كان إرادة.

[٣٨٠] ل: الارادة.

كانت الآلام الحاصلة بسبب [س: ١٣٦ب] فوت تلك المرادات[٣٨١] أكثر. لكن من المعلوم أنّ حصول المرادات [م: ١٢٣ب] الجسمانيّة أبداً كالممتنع؛ لأنّ أجسام هذا العالم مبنيّةٌ على التغيّر والتبدّل وسرعة الانقراض والانقضاء، كأنها الزئبق[٣٨٢] يتبدّل[٣٨٣] من حال إلى حال. فثبت أنّه[٣٨٤] كلّما كانت الرئاسة أكبر[٣٨٥] وأعظم، كانت الحسرات[٣٨٦] والزفراتُ والغموم والهموم أقوى وأكثر. وأمّا القسم الثاني — وهو أن لا يكون رئيساً — فهو إمّا أن يكون معطّلاً محروماً، وإمّا أن يكون خادماً ضعيفاً؛ وكلاهما منفِّران.

الوجه الرابع عشر في مقابح أحوال هذا العالم، لا سيّما في الرئاسة: إنّ[٣٨٧] حصول الرئاسة إمّا أن يكون مع العدل، أو مع الظلم؛ وكلاهما مذمومٌ[٣٨٨]. أمّا مع العدل، فهذا متعذِّرٌ؛ لأنّ هذا يفضي إلى[٣٨٩] تسليم الرئاسة إلى كلّ مَن كان أولى به وأشدّ استحقاقاً له[٣٩٠]. ومثل هذه الرئاسة كأنها[٣٩١] لم تتّفق البتّة. وإن حصلت[٣٩٢]، إلاّ إنها كانت[٣٩٣] في غاية الندرة. وأمّا مع الظلم، فهذا أيضاً منفِّرٌ؛

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[٣٨١] ل: الإرادات.
[٣٨٢] س، م: فانها كالزئبق.
[٣٨٣] ل: تبدل.
[٣٨٤] س: ان.
[٣٨٥] س، م: اكثر.
[٣٨٦] س: الكرّات.
[٣٨٧] ل: لأن.
[٣٨٨] م: مذمومان.
[٣٨٩] س، م: يقتضي.
[٣٩٠] سقطت من م.
[٣٩١] م: كأنما.
[٣٩٢] س: جعلت.
[٣٩٣] سقطت من ل.

لأنّ ذلك يوجب[٣٩٤] استحقاقَ اللعنِ والتحقير والتوبيخ مِن أهل العقل والدين. وتَصوُّر هذه الأحوال أيضاً منفّرٌ جدّاً.

الوجه الخامس عشر في قبائح الرئاسة: وهو أنها لا يمكن إجراؤها[٣٩٥] على الظاهر إلاّ مع الكذب والتزوير. فإنّ الرئيس الكامل الفاضل لو شافَهَ[٣٩٦] كلَّ أحد بأنّك لا تَستحقّ إلاّ القدر الفلانيّ من التعظيم، وأنّك دون فلان وفلان، لتشوَّشَت[٣٩٧] رئاستُه، واختلّت ولايتُه. بل لا بدّ وأن يقول لكلّ أحدٍ: "إنّكَ أفضل الناس، وأكمل أصحابي، وعليك اعتمادي؛ وإني على عزم أن[٣٩٨] أُربيك فوق ما أُربي غيرَك"؛ مع أنّه يعلم أنّ كلّ ما يقوله كذبٌ و زورٌ وبُهتانٌ. فثبت أنّ الرئاسة لا تتمّ إلاّ مع هذه المنفِّرات.

و[٣٩٩] **الوجه السادس عشر** في بيان[٤٠٠] قبح [م: ١٢٤أ] لذّة[٤٠١] الرئاسة والإمارة: وذلك أنّ[٤٠٢] الرئاسة إنما تكمل بكثرة الخدم والتبع. وإذا كَثُر الأتباعُ والأعوانُ، احتاج الرئيسُ [ل: ٢٦٤] إلى الإنفاق الكثير. وذلك لا يمكن إلاّ بالمال الكثير. وتحصيل المالِ شاقٌّ؛ فكان تحصيل المالِ الكثير أشقّ. فلو لم يكن للرئيس[٤٠٣] من المتاعب والمشاقّ إلاّ[٤٠٤] تعلُّق قلبه بتحصيل الأموال الكثيرة وصونها

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[٣٩٤] سقطت من ل.
[٣٩٥] س: اجراها.
[٣٩٦] ل: شاور.
[٣٩٧] ل: تشوشت.
[٣٩٨] سقطت من س.
[٣٩٩] سقطت من س، م.
[٤٠٠] سقطت من ل، س.
[٤٠١] سقطت من م.
[٤٠٢] س: لأن.
[٤٠٣] س: الرئيس.
[٤٠٤] س: لا.

عن السُرّاق واللصوص، لكفاه ذلك تعباً ومشقّةً. فكيف وأنّه يحتاج إلى تحصيل تلك الأموال من غير وجوهها[٤٠٥]! فيصير مستوجباً للّعن والخزي والنكال بسبب تحصيلها. ثمّ إذا[٤٠٦] دفعها إلى الرعيّة، فكلّ[٤٠٧] مَن دفع إليه قدراً من المال، فذلك الرجل يستحقر ذلك القَدْر، فيطمع[٤٠٨] في الزائد عليه، فيلعنه بسبب أنّه قلّل في تلك العطية. فهذا الرئيس لا يستفيد[٤٠٩] من [س: ١٣٧أ] رئاسته وولايته إلاّ الطعن واللعن في الأوّل وفي الآخِر، وإلاّ استحقاق العذاب[٤١٠] والمقت من عند الله عند الدخل والخرج.

الوجه السابع عشر أنّ هذا الرئيس الآمر[٤١١] الناهي إمّا أن يكون حَسنَ العِشرة[٤١٢]، طيّب الخُلق، غير مهيب، وإمّا أن يكون مهيباً معظّماً. وفي كلّ واحدٍ من القسمين آفاتٌ. أمّا القسم الأوّل، فهو أنهم إذا اختلطوا به[٤١٣] ولم يحشموه، لم[٤١٤] يبق له في قلوبهم وقعٌ؛ فلا[٤١٥] ينقادون له البتّة، ولا يلتفتون إليه. والرعية إذا كانوا كذلك، صار ذلك سبباً لزوال المُلك ولخراب[٤١٦] العالم.

وأمّا القسم الثاني، وهو أن يكون مهيباً عظيم السطوة شديد القهر، فالآفة

[٤٠٥] س: وجوها.

[٤٠٦] ساقطة من س.

[٤٠٧] م: وكل.

[٤٠٨] س، م: ويطمع.

[٤٠٩] س: يستقدر.

[٤١٠] س: في الأول والآخر والاستخفاف والعذاب.

[٤١١] واو زائدة في ل.

[٤١٢] م: المعاشرة و.

[٤١٣] سقطت من م.

[٤١٤] س: يحتشموه ولم.

[٤١٥] م: ولا.

[٤١٦] م: خراب.

فيه أنهم إذا خافوه[٤١٧]، فربما قصدوا[٤١٨] قتلَه وعزلَه[٤١٩]. وأمّا إن قيل: "إنّه لا بد من التوسّط بين الحالتين"، فذلك التوسّط الحقّ[٤٢٠] غير معلوم، [م: ١٢٤ب] ومقداره غير مضبوط. فربما أتى الإنسان بالرفق في موضع كانٍ اللائق به القهر والسطوة[٤٢١]؛ وربما كانٍ بالضدّ منه. فلهذا السبب، يكون[٤٢٢] الرئيس أبداً خائفاً وجلاً أنّه هل[٤٢٣] أصاب فيما أتى به، أم لا[٤٢٤].

الوجه الثامن عشر: أنّ الرئيس إمّا أن يُسوّي بين جميع أصحابه في العطية والتعظيم[٤٢٥]، وإمّا أن يُفضِّل البعضَ على البعض. أمّا القسم الأوّل، فهو من أعظم الأسباب لاختلال المملكة والرئاسة. فإنّه يقال: "إنّ هذا الرجل لا يراعي[٤٢٦] مراتبَ الحقوق، ولا يفوِّض المنصبَ إلى أهله. فوجب [ل: ٢٦٥] الفرار منه". وأمّا القسم الثاني، فهو أيضاً يوجِب وقوعَ الحسد في قلب المرجوح؛ وذلك ممّا يحمله على الفتك بالرئيس، وقصدِه بكلّ سوءٍ عند القدرة. وذلك أيضاً من أعظم الآفات.

الوجه التاسع عشر أنّ الرئاسة حقيقتها أنّ الرجل الواحد[٤٢٧] التَزَم: "إني

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[٤١٧] ل: خافوا.

[٤١٨] س: قصدوه.

[٤١٩] سقطت من م.

[٤٢٠] سقطت من م.

[٤٢١] م:كان به القهر والسطوة أولى.

[٤٢٢] مكررة في م.

[٤٢٣] سقطت من س.

[٤٢٤] "وجلاً أنه أصاب فيما أتى به أم لا" سقطت من ل. وتصحيحها بالهامش، سقط معظمه مع الترميم.

[٤٢٥] سقطت من س.

[٤٢٦] س: يراع.

[٤٢٧] سقطت من س. ل: والواحد.

أُصلح جميعَ[٤٢٨] مهمّات الخلق". وعقل الإنسان الواحد[٤٢٩] لا يفي بإصلاح مصالحه بعينه[٤٣٠]؛ فكيف يفي بإصلاح مهمّات الخلق! فثبت أنّه مقامٌ صعبٌ، وفيه خطرٌ.

الوجه العشرون: هب أنّ هذه الرئاسة في غاية اللذّة والبهجة. إلاّ إنّ[٤٣١] عند الموت، لا بدّ مِن تركِها. فكلّما[٤٣٢] كانت تلك[٤٣٣] اللذّة أقوى وأكمل، كانت الآلام الحاصلة بسبب تركِها أقوى وأكمل.

وعند التعارض يقتضي العقلُ وجوبَ البقاء على العدم[٤٣٤] الأصليّ.

القسم الثالث:
في اللذّات العقليّة الحاصلة بسبب العلوم

اعلم أنّ العلوم إمّا عقليّةٌ، وإمّا وضعيّةٌ. أمّا العلوم الوضعيّة، فإنّه لا يُنتفَع بها[٤٣٥] إلاّ بسبب مصالح الحياة الجسمانيّة. والتبع[٤٣٦] [س: ١٣٧ب] لا يكون أكملَ من الأصل. فلمّا بيّنّا خساسةَ الحياة الجسمانيّة، كانت العلوم التي لا تُراد إلاّ لمصالح هذه الحياة [م: ١٢٥أ] الخسيسة أولى بالخساسة. وبهذا الحرف، تعرف أنّ أكثر

[٤٢٨] ساقطة من ل.
[٤٢٩] سقطت من ل، م.
[٤٣٠] ل: مصالح نفسه.
[٤٣١] سقطت من س.
[٤٣٢] س: فلما.
[٤٣٣] سقطت من ل.
[٤٣٤] س: يقضي العقل بوجوب تفاعل العدم. م: يقضي العقل بوجوب.
[٤٣٥] م: به.
[٤٣٦] س: والنفع.

العلوم التي تَرى الخلقَ مقبلين عليها علومٌ خسيسةٌ، لأنّه[٤٣٧] لا فائدة فيها إلاّ رعاية[٤٣٨] المصالح الدنيويّة.

وأمّا العلوم العقليّة، فهي إمّا أن تكون مطلوبةً لذاتها، أو لغيرها. أمّا العلم العقليّ[٤٣٩] المطلوب لغيره، فهو المنطق. ولمّا كان مطلوباً لغيره، كان شرفه على قدْرِ شرفِ ذلك الغير. و[٤٤٠] أمّا العلوم العقليّة المطلوبة بالذات، فهي محصورةٌ في أربعة أنواع: معرفة الإله، ومعرفة الروحانيّات، ومعرفة العالم الأعلى، ومعرفة العالم الأسفلٍ.

القسم الأوّل: وهو معرفة الإله، وهو أشرف الأقسام. ولكن مَن الذي وَصَل إلى عتبة تلك الحضرة العالية! ومَن الذي شمّ رائحةَ ذلك الجناب المقدَّس! فحاصلُ العقول[٤٤١] ظنونٌ وحُسباناتٌ، ومنتهى الأمر أوهامٌ وخيالاتٌ. والذي يقرِّر ذلك وجوهٌ؛ بعضها إجماليّةٌ، وبعضها تفصيليّةٌ. [ل: ٢٦٦] أمّا الإجماليّة، فمن وجوهٍ.

[الوجوه الإجماليّة]

الأوّل

إنّ الحجّة لا تكون يقينيّةً إلاّ إذا كانت مادّته يقينيّةً — إمّا ابتداءً، أو يقينيّة اللزومِ[٤٤٢] عمّا هو يقينيٌّ ابتداءً، إمّا بواسطةٍ واحدةٍ، أو بوسائط، شأن كلِّ واحدٍ

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[٤٣٧] س، م: فإنه.

[٤٣٨] م: إعانة.

[٤٣٩] زيادة في م: الذي.

[٤٤٠] سقطت من س.

[٤٤١] زيادة في م: كلها.

[٤٤٢] س، م: للزوم.

منها ذلك — وكانت صورته أيضاً يقينيّةً، إمّا ابتداءً، وإمّا بواسطة. ومن المعلوم أنّ المقدّمات إذا كانت يقينيّةً ابتداءً، امتَنع وقوعُ النزاع فيها؛ وإذاً كانت يقينيّةَ اللزومِ عمّا هو يقينيٌّ إبتداءً، امتنع وقوعُ النزاع أيضاً فيه[٤٤٣]. وإذا كانت الصورة يقينيّةَ الصحّة، امتنع أيضاً وقوع النزاع فيها[٤٤٤].

و[٤٤٥] إذا ثبت هذا، فنقول: كلّ ما كان برهاناً يقينيّاً، فإنّ مَن سمعه ووقَف عليه، وأحاط عقلُه بجميع مقدّماته، [م: ١٢٥ب] فإنّه يمتنع منه أن ينازع فيه. فإن بقي له[٤٤٦] نزاعٌ فيه، وجب أن يكون لأجل أنّ مقدّماته خاليةٌ عن تلك الشرائط، أو[٤٤٧] لأجل أنّ تركيبه خالٍ[٤٤٨] عن ذلك.

و[٤٤٩] إذا ثبت هذا، فنقول: هذه الأشياء المسمّاة "براهين[٤٥٠]"، لو كانت في أنفسها براهين، لكان كلّ مَن سمعها ووقف عليها، وَجَبَ أن يُقرّ بها[٤٥١] وأن لا ينكِرها أصلاً. وحيث نرى أنّ الذي يسمّيه أحدُ الخصمين "برهاناً"، فإنّ الخصم الثاني[٤٥٢] يسمعه ويعرفه، ولا يفيد له ظنّاً ضعيفاً، علمنا أنّ هذه الأشياء ليست في أنفسها براهين، بل هي مقدّماتٌ ضعيفةٌ انضافت العصبيّةُ والمحبّةُ إليها؛ فيجعل[٤٥٣] بعضُهم كونَه برهاناً، مع أنّ الأمر في نفسه ليس كذلك.

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[٤٤٣] "وإذا كانت يقينيّة اللزوم عمّا هو يقينيّ إبتداءً امتنع وقوع النزاع أيضاً فيه" سقطت من س.

[٤٤٤] ل، س: فيه.

[٤٤٥] سقطت من س، م.

[٤٤٦] سقطت من س. ل: به.

[٤٤٧] س: و.

[٤٤٨] ل، س: خالي.

[٤٤٩] سقطت من م.

[٤٥٠] س، م: بالبراهين.

[٤٥١] م: يقبلها.

[٤٥٢] س: الذي.

[٤٥٣] م: فيخيّل.

الحجّة الثانية

إنّ المشبِّه يحتجّ على القول بالتشبيه بحجّة، ويزعم أنّ تلك الحجّة أفادته الجزمَ واليقين. والمعطِّل أيضاً يحتجّ بحجّة على القول بالتعطيل، ويزعم أنّ تلك [س: ١٣٨أ] الحجّة أفادته الجزمَ واليقين. فإمّا أن يقال: "إنّ[٤٥٤] كلّ واحدة من هاتين الحجّتين صحيحةٌ يقينيّةٌ[٤٥٥]"، فحينئذ يَلزم صدقُ[٤٥٦] النقيضين. وهو باطلٌ. وإمّا أن يقال: "إحداهما[٤٥٧] صحيحةٌ، والأخرى[٤٥٨] فاسدةٌ؛ إلاّ إنّه متى كان الأمر كذلك، كانت مقدّمةٌ[٤٥٩] واحدةٌ من مقدّمات تلك الحجّة باطلةً في نفسها، مع أنّ الذي [ل: ٢٦٧] تمسّك بتلك الحجّة جزَم بصحّة تلك المقدّمة ابتداءً". فهذا يدلّ على أنّ العقل قد يجزم بصحّة الفاسد جزماً[٤٦٠] ابتداءً. وإذا[٤٦١] كان الأمر كذلك، كان العقل غير مقبول القولِ في البديهيّات. وإذا كان كذلك، فحينئذٍ تفسد جميعُ الدلائل.

فإن قالوا: "العقل إنما جزَم بصحّة ذلك الفاسد لشبهة متقدّمة"، فنقول: فقد[٤٦٢] حصل في تلك الشبهة المتقدّمة مقدّمةٌ فاسدةٌ. فإن كان جَزَم بها لشبهةٍ[٤٦٣] [م: ١٢٦أ] أخرى، لزم التسلسلُ. وإن كان ابتداءً، فقد توجّه الطعنُ.

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[٤٥٤] سقطت من ل، س.

[٤٥٥] ل: بعينه.

[٤٥٦] ل: ضد.

[٤٥٧] ل: إحداها. م: إحدهما.

[٤٥٨] م: الآخر.

[٤٥٩] س: مقدمته.

[٤٦٠] سقطت من س.

[٤٦١] م: فإذا.

[٤٦٢] سقطت من س.

[٤٦٣] ل: بشبه.

الحجّة الثالثة

إنّا نرى الدلائل القويّة في بعض المسائل العقليّة متعارضةً؛ مثلَ مسألة[٤٦٤] الجوهر الفرد. فإنّا نقول: كلّ متحيّزٍ، فإنّ يمينه غيرُ يساره؛ وكلّ ما كان كذلك، فهو منقسمٌ؛ ينتج أنّ كلّ متحيّزٍ منقسمٌ.

ثمّ نقول: الآنُ الحاضرُ غيرُ منقسم؛ وإلاّ، لم يكن[٤٦٥] كلّه حاضراً، بل بعضه. وإذا كان غير منقسم، كان أوّلُ عدمِه في آن آخَر متّصلٍ بآنِ وجوده. فلزم تتالي الآنات. ويلزم منه كَونُ الجسم مركّباً من الأجزاء التي لا تتجزّأُ[٤٦٦].

فهذان الدليلان متعارضان. ولا نجد جواباً شافياً عن[٤٦٧] أحدهما. ونعلم أنّ أحد الكلامين شبهةٌ. فكان أحدُ الكلامين مشتملاً[٤٦٨] على مقدّمةٍ باطلةٍ؛ وقد جزَم العقلُ بصحّتها ابتداءً[٤٦٩]. فصار العقلُ مطعوناً[٤٧٠] فيه.

الحجّة الرابعة

إنّا إذا نظرنا وتأمّلنا واستقصينا، وحصل عقيبَ ذلك النظر اعتقادٌ، فعلمُنا بكون ذلك الاعتقاد علماً، إن كان ضروريّاً، فهو باطلٌ؛ لأنّه كثيراً ما أن[٤٧١] ينكشف

[٤٦٤] س: مسائل.
[٤٦٥] ل: يمكن.
[٤٦٦] م: أجزاء لا تتجزأ.
[٤٦٧] ل: من.
[٤٦٨] م: أحدهما ونعلم أنّ أحد الكلامين مشتملٌ.
[٤٦٩] س، م: ابدا.
[٤٧٠] ل: مظنونا.
[٤٧١] سقطت من س، م.

أنّ الحقّ بخلافه. وإن كان نظريّاً، افتقر إلى دليلٍ آخَر[٤٧٢]؛ ولزم التسلسلُ[٤٧٣]؛ وهو محالٌ.[٤٧٤]

[الوجوه التفصيليّة]

وأمّا الوجوه التفصيليّة[٤٧٥]، فنقول: الكلام إمّا[٤٧٦] أن يقع في الإلهيّات، أو في النبوّات، أو في المعاد. أمّا الكلام[٤٧٧] في الإلهيّات، فنقول: إنّا نشاهد هذه الأجرام العلويّة والسفليّة. فالعقل ها هنا يقول: هذه الأشياء إمّا أن يقال إنّه حصل لها مؤثّرٌ، أو لم يحصل لها مؤثّرٌ. وإن[٤٧٨] كان لها مؤثّرٌ، فالعقل يَعتبر حالَ ذلك المؤثّر، تارةً بحسب ذاته، وتارةً بحسب تأثيره في هذا العالم. أمّا [ل: ٢٦٨] الاعتبار الأوّل، فهو أنّ ذلك[٤٧٩] المؤثّر إمّا أن يكون حاصلاً[٤٨٠] في حيِّز وجهة، وإمّا أن لا [م:١٢٦ب] يكون. وأمّا [س: ١٣٨ب] الاعتبار الثاني، فهو أنّ ذلك المؤثّر إمّا أن يكون موجباً بالذات، وإمّا أن يكون فاعلاً مختاراً يفعل أفعالَه على وفق مصالح الخلق، وإمّا أن يكون فاعلاً مختاراً يفعل أفعالَه[٤٨١]، لكنّه لا يراعي مصالحَ الخلق.

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[٤٧٢] سقطت من م.
[٤٧٣] س: آخر وتسلسل.
[٤٧٤] "الحجة الخامسة" زائدة في س.
[٤٧٥] سقطت من س.
[٤٧٦] سقطت من ل.
[٤٧٧] سقطت من م.
[٤٧٨] م: فإن.
[٤٧٩] سقطت من م.
[٤٨٠] سقطت من س.
[٤٨١] "على وفق مصالح الخلق وإما أن يكون فاعلاً مختاراً يفعل أفعاله" سقطت من س.

فنقول: أمّا الاعتبار الأوّل — وهو قول مَن ينفي المؤثِّر — فالقائلون بهذا القول يُحتمل أن يذهبوا إلى ثلاثة أنواع من[٤٨٢] الاحتمالات[٤٨٣]. الأوّل أن يقولوا[٤٨٤]: "هذه الأجسام واجبةُ الوجود لذواتها؛ فلا جرم كانت غنيّةً عن الفاعل". الثاني[٤٨٥]: "إنها — وإن لم تكن واجبة الوجود لذواتها — إلاّ إنّ الوجود بها أولى. فلأجل هذه الأولويّة، استغنت عن الفاعل." الثالث: "إنها محدَثةٌ؛ إلاّ أنّ المحدَث لا حاجة به إلى المؤثّر والفاعل[٤٨٦]".

و[٤٨٧] أمّا الاعتبار الثاني — وهو أنّ لها مؤثّراً[٤٨٨] موجِباً بالذات — فهذا على قسمين. لأنّه إمّا أن يجوز أن يصدر عن الواحد أكثرُ من الواحد، وإمّا أن لا يجوز. فالأوّل احتمالٌ ظاهرٌ؛ فيقال[٤٨٩] عنده: إنّه تعالى هو المؤثّر في وجود كلّ الممكنات على مراتبها الخاصّة المعيّنة. والثاني احتمالٌ ذهب إليه أكثرُ[٤٩٠] الفلاسفة، وتفاصيله[٤٩١] معلومةٌ.

وأمّا الاعتبار الثالث — وهو أنّ موجِد العالم فاعلٌ مختارٌ، وتكون أفعاله واقعةً على وجه الحكمة ومراعاةِ مصالح العباد — فهذا قولٌ قال به جمعٌ عظيمٌ من أهل العالم. إلاّ أنّه وقع عليه سؤالٌ: وهو أنّا نَرى العالَمَ مملوءاً من الآلام والآفات؛ فكيف يليق ذلك بالإله الرحيم؟ فلأجل هذا السؤال، افترق أهلُ العالم إلى مذاهب.

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[٤٨٢] س: و.

[٤٨٣] م: الاحتمال.

[٤٨٤] س: يقول.

[٤٨٥] س: والثاني.

[٤٨٦] م: وللفاعل.

[٤٨٧] سقطت من س.

[٤٨٨] زيادة في س: و.

[٤٨٩] س: فنقول.

[٤٩٠] سقطت من م.

[٤٩١] ل، م: وتفاصيلهم.

فالمذهب الأوّل أنهم قالوا: "للعالم إلهان، أحدهما خيّرٌ فاضلٌ رحيمٌ، والثاني شرّيرٌ سفيهٌ مؤذٍ[٤٩٢]."

والمذهب الثّاني أنهم قالوا: [م: ١٢٧أ] "العالم إنما حدث بسبب تعلُّقِ[٤٩٣] النفس بالهيولى. والنفس جاهلةٌ، وكان الأصلح أن لا تتعلّق النفسُ بالهيولى. إلاّ أنها لما تعلّقَت، فالإله الحكيم أوقَع ذلك [ل: ٢٦٩] التركيب على الوجه الأصلح الأصوب. فكلّ[٤٩٤] ما في هذا[٤٩٥] العالم من الخير والراحة[٤٩٦]، فهو من عناية الله. وكلّ ما فيه من الشرّ والآفة، فهو من جهل النفس."

المذهب الثالث قول المعتزلة؛ و[٤٩٧] هو أن كلّ ما وقع في العالم من الآلام والآفات، فإنّ الله يعوِّض[٤٩٨] عنها يومَ القيامة.

المذهب الرابع: أنّ خَلْق هذا العالم حَصَل فيه خيرٌ وشرٌّ؛ لكنّ الغالب هو الخير. وخَلْقُ الخيرِ خالياً عن الشرّ كان ممتنعاً بعينه[٤٩٩]. وتركُ الخيرِ الكثير لأجل الشرّ القليل شرٌّ كثيرٌ. فاقتضت الحكمةُ خلْقَ هذا[٥٠٠] العالم مع ما فيه من الشرور الكثيرة[٥٠١].

وأمّا الاعتبار الرابع — وهو أنّ لهذا العالم إلهاً فاعلاً مختاراً، لكنّه لا يراعي مصالحَ العباد ومنافعهم، [س: ١٣٩أ] بل تارةً يوصل النفعَ إليهم، وتارةً يوصل

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[٤٩٢] ل: موذي.

[٤٩٣] ل: تولد.

[٤٩٤] م: وكل.

[٤٩٥] سقطت من ل، م.

[٤٩٦] م: الخيرات والراحات.

[٤٩٧] سقطت من م.

[٤٩٨] س: فانها يعرض.

[٤٩٩] م: لعينه.

[٥٠٠] سقطت من س.

[٥٠١] سقطت من م.

الضررَ إليهم؛ ويفعل ما يشاء من غير ضبط في المصالح والمفاسد — فهذا الاعتبار أيضاً على وجهين. الأوّل[٥٠٢]: الّذين أنكَروا النبوّةَ والوعدَ والوعيدَ، و[٥٠٣] قالوا: "إنّه لا اعتماد على وعده ووعيده، ولا على طاعته ولا على[٥٠٤] معصيته"؛ وهم منكروا التكليف. والثاني: الذين[٥٠٥] أقرّوا بالنبوّات والتكاليف.

فهذه هي المذاهب التي ذهب إليها أهلُ العالم. ولنذكر ما[٥٠٦] في كلّ واحدٍ منها من المناقب والمعايب[٥٠٧].

أمّا الاعتبار الأوّل، وهو نفي المؤثّر أصلاً، فهذا[٥٠٨] أقبح الوجوه وأبعدها عن العقل والذوق. والطريق في إبطال هذا القول أن نقول: "هذه الأجسام [م: ١٢٧ب] ممكنةٌ[٥٠٩]؛ وكلّ ممكن، فلا بدّ له من مؤثّرٍ". فهذا الكلام مبنيٌّ على هاتين المقدّمتين[٥١٠]. أمّا بيان أنها ممكنةٌ، ففيه طريقان.

أمّا المتكلّمون، فيقولون: هذه الأجسام محدَثةٌ؛ وكلّ محدَث فهو ممكنٌ؛ وكلّ ممكنٍ فله مؤثّرٌ. أمّا بيان أنّ الأجسام محدَثةٌ، فلأنها لو كانتً أزليّةً، لكانت[٥١١] في الأزل إمّا أن تكون[٥١٢] متحرّكةً، وإمّا[٥١٣] ساكنةً. ويمتنع كونها في الأزل[٥١٤]

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[٥٠٢] زيادة في ل: أن.

[٥٠٣] سقطت من ل.

[٥٠٤] سقطت من س، م.

[٥٠٥] س: الذي.

[٥٠٦] سقطت من س.

[٥٠٧] م: المثالب.

[٥٠٨] س، م: فهو.

[٥٠٩] "وكل ممكنة" زائدة في ل.

[٥١٠] م: على مقدّمتين.

[٥١١] م: لكان.

[٥١٢] "أن تكون" سقطت من ل، س.

[٥١٣] م: أو.

[٥١٤] س: الأول.

متحرّكةً وساكنةً[٥١٥]؛ فيمتنع كونها أزليّةً. وهذا دليلٌ مشهورٌ، والكلام فيه معلومٌ.

وأمّا الفلاسفة، فقد بيّنوا إمكانَ العالم من وجوه. الأوّل أنّ أجسام العالم[٥١٦] كثيرةٌ؛ [ل: ٢٧٠] وواجب الوجود لا يكون أكثر من واحدٍ. والثاني أنّ أجسام العالم وجودها غير ماهيّاتها[٥١٧]؛ وكلّ ما كان كذلك، فهو ممكنٌ لذاته. والثالث أنّ أجسام العالم منقسمةٌ إلى الأجزاء؛ وكلّ ما كان كذلك، فهو ممكنٌ لذاته[٥١٨]. وهذه الوجوه فيها مباحثاتٌ غائصةٌ غامضةٌ[٥١٩]، وقد قرّرناها في كتبنا الحقيقيّة[٥٢٠].

وأمّا أنّ كلّ ممكنٍ فله مؤثّرٌ، فتارةً تُدَّعى فيه البديهةُ، وتارةً يُدّعى فيه الاستدلالُ. وتمام الكلام فيه مذكورٌ في المطالب العالية،[٥٢١] وفي سائر الكتب.

وأمّا الاحتمال الثاني — وهو أنّ المؤثِّر في العالم موجِبٌ بالذات — فتمام الكلام فيه مذكورٌ في المطالب العالية.[٥٢٢] ويتفرّع عليه أنّه هل يصدر عنه الكثيرُ، أو الحقّ[٥٢٣] أنّه لا يصدر عنه إلاّ الواحدُ؟ وتمام الكلام في هذين الاحتمالين مذكورٌ في المطالب العالية.[٥٢٤]

وأمّا الاحتمال الثالث — وهو إثبات الفاعل المختار الذي يفعل على وفق

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[٥١٥] م: متحرّكة في الأزل وساكنة أيضاً.

[٥١٦] س: الأجسام.

[٥١٧] س، م: ماهيتها.

[٥١٨] "والثالث أن أجسام العالم منقسمة إلى الأجزاء وكلّ ما كان كذلك فهو ممكن لذاته" سقطت من س.

[٥١٩] "غائصة" سقطت من س. م: غامضة غائصة.

[٥٢٠] س: كتب الحقيقة.

[٥٢١] المطالب العالية، ١، ٧٤ — ٩٠.

[٥٢٢] المطالب العالية، ٣، ٧٧ — ١٠٠.

[٥٢٣] م: الكثير أو الواحد والحقّ أنّه.

[٥٢٤] المطالب العالية، ٤، ٣٧٣ — ٣٩٧.

الحكمة والمصلحة – فأوّل ما فيه أنّ هذا [م: ١٢٨أ] بناءٌ على أنّ الحُسنَ والقُبحَ[٥٢٥] معتبَران في أفعال الله وأحكامه؛ وهو في غاية الصعوبة، على ما بيّنّاه في المطالب العالية.[٥٢٦] ثمّ، بعد تسليمه، فإنّه يتفرّع عليه المذاهبُ الأربعة التي ذكرناها، وفي كلّ واحد منها[٥٢٧] سؤالاتٌ و[٥٢٨] غوامضُ.

وأمّا الاحتمال الرابعُ – وهو [س: ١٣٩ب] إثبات الفاعل المختار الذي لا يراعي المصالحَ[٥٢٩]، بل يفعل كيف شاء وأراد – ففيه أيضاً غوامضُ ومباحثُ[٥٣٠] ومشكلاتٌ.

ثمّ بعد النـــزول عن هذه المقامات الأربعة، فهل يمكننا أن نقطع بأنّ[٥٣١] مدبِّر العالم بكلّيّته هو الله تعالى؟ أو يجوز أن يقال: ها هنا وسائطُ من الأرواح والأجسام و[٥٣٢] المدبِّرات، مع أنّ[٥٣٣] انتهاءَ الكلّ إلى تقدير الله وتخليقه؟ فهذا أيضاً مقامٌ صعبٌ عسِرٌ.

واعلم أنّك متى أحطتَ بهذه المقامات العالية والمقدّمات الرفيعة الشريفة، ووقفتَ على[٥٣٤] ما في كلّ واحد منها من[٥٣٥] السؤالات المشكلة والاعتراضات الغامضة، علِمتَ أنّ المعرفة اليقينيّة صعبةٌ، وأنّ الجزم في كلّ بابٍ بحيث يكون

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٥٢٥ س: الحَسَن والقبيح.

٥٢٦ المطالب العالية، ٣، ٣٠٥ – ٣٣٩.

٥٢٧ سقطت من م.

٥٢٨ سقطت من س.

٥٢٩ س: مصالح.

٥٣٠ سقطت من س.

٥٣١ س: ان.

٥٣٢ ل، م: أو.

٥٣٣ سقطت من م.

٥٣٤ سقطت من س.

٥٣٥ س: في.

خالياً عن المِرية[٥٣٦] والاضطراب عزيزٌ. وإذا كان الأمر[٥٣٧] كذلك، فالشوق شديدٌ، والحرمان غالبٌ، والآلة ضعيفةٌ، والمطلوب قاهرٌ.

[خاتمة]

وإذا وقفتَ[٥٣٨] على هذه [ل: ٢٧١] الأحوال، صارت اللذّات الحسيّة خسيسةً[٥٣٩]، واللذّات الخياليّة مستحقَرةً. وأمّا اللذّات العقليّة، فلا سبيل إلى الوصولِ إليها، والقُربِ[٥٤٠] منها، والتعلّقِ بها[٥٤١]. فلهذه الأسباب نقول: ليتنا[٥٤٢] بقينا على العدم [م:١٢٨ب] الأوّل! و ليتنا ما شاهدنا هذا العالَمَ! وليت النفس لم تتعلّق بهذا البدن! وفي هذا المعنى قلتُ:

نهايةُ أقدامِ العقولِ عقالُ ... وأكثرُ سعيِ العالَمين ضلالُ
وأرواحنا في وحشةٍ من جُسومنا ... وحاصلُ دنيانا أذىً ووبالُ
ولم نستفد مِن بحثنا طولَ عمرِنا ... سوى أن جمَعنا فيه قيلَ وقالوا
وكم قد رأينا من رجالٍ ودولة ... فبادوا جميعاً مسرعين وزالوا[٥٤٣]
وكم مِن جبالٍ قد علَت شرفاتِها ... رجالٌ فزالوا والجبالُ جبالُ[٥٤٤]

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[٥٣٦] المِرية والمُرية: الشك والجدل.
[٥٣٧] سقطت من ل.
[٥٣٨] س: وقعت.
[٥٣٩] سقطت من س.
[٥٤٠] س: والتقرب.
[٥٤١] "والتعلق بها" سقطت من س.
[٥٤٢] م: يا ليتنا.
[٥٤٣] س: فزالوا.
[٥٤٤] من البحر الطويل.

واعلم أني بعد التوغّل في هذه المضائق، و[٥٤٥] التعمّق في الاستكشاف عن أسرار هذه الحقائق، رأيتُ الأصوبَ الأصلحَ في هذا الباب طريقةَ القرآن العظيم والفرقان الكريم، وهو تركُ التعمّقِ والاستدلالِ بأقسامِ أجسامِ السموات والأرضين على وجود ربّ العالمين، ثمّ المبالغة في[٥٤٦] التعظيمِ من غيرِ خوضٍ في التفاصيل. فأقرأ في التنــــزيه قولَه[٥٤٧]، "اللهُ الغَنِيُّ وَأَنتُمُ الفُقَرَاءُ"؛[٥٤٨] وقولَه، "لَيسَ كَمِثلِه شَيءٌ"؛[٥٤٩] وقولَه، "قُلْ هُوَ اللهُ أَحَدٌ". وأقرأ في الإثبات، "الرَحمَنُ عَلَى العَرشِ استَوَى"؛[٥٥٠] وقولَه، "يَخَافُونَ رَبَّهُم من فَوقِهِم"؛[٥٥١] وقولَه، "إلَيه يَصعَدُ الكَلِمُ الطَيِّبُ".[٥٥٢] وأقرأ [س: ١٤٠أ] في أنّ الكلَّ من الله قولَه، "قُلْ كُلٌّ من عندِ الله".[٥٥٣] وفي تنــــزيهه[٥٥٤] عمّا لا ينبغي قولَه، "مَا أَصَابَكَ مِن حَسَنَةٍ فَمِنَ اللهِ وَمَا أَصَابَكَ مِن سَيِّئَةٍ فَمِن نَفسِكَ".[٥٥٥] وعلى هذا القانون، فقِسْ.

وأقول من صميمِ القلب، ومن داخل [م: ١٢٩أ] الروح[٥٥٦]: إني مقرٌّ بأنّ كلّ ما كان[٥٥٧] هو الأكمل الأفضل الأعظم الأجلّ فهو لك، وكلّ ما فيه عيبٌ أو[٥٥٨]

[٥٤٥] "المضائق و" سقطت من س.
[٥٤٦] س: و.
[٥٤٧] زيادة في م: تعالى.
[٥٤٨] محمد ٣٨.
[٥٤٩] الشورى ١١.
[٥٥٠] طه ٥.
[٥٥١] النحل ٥٠.
[٥٥٢] فاطر ١٠.
[٥٥٣] النساء ٧٨.
[٥٥٤] س: التنزيه.
[٥٥٥] النساء ٧٩.
[٥٥٦] س: داخل الروح وصميم القلب.
[٥٥٧] سقطت من س، م.
[٥٥٨] م: و.

نقصٌ فأنت منـــزَّهٌ عنه. ومقرٌّ بأنّ عقلي وفهمي[٥٥٩] قاصرٌ عن الوصول إلى كُنه حقيقة ذرّةٍ من ذرّاتِ مخلوقاتك. ومقرٌّ بأني ما مدحتُك بما يليق بك؛ لأنّ المدائح محصورةٌ في نوعين. إمّا في شرحِ صفات الجلال، وهو[٥٦٠] تنـــزيه الله عمّا لا ينبغي؛ وإمّا في شرحِ صفات الإكرام[٥٦١]، وهو وصفُ الله بكونه خالقاً لهذا العالم. أمّا الأوّل، ففيه سوء أدبٍ من بعض الوجوه؛ لأنّ الرجل إذا قال [ل: ٢٧٢] للسلطان: "أنت لستَ بأعمى، ولستَ بأصمّ ولا بأبرص"، فإنّه يَستوجِب[٥٦٢] الزجرَ والحجرَ. وأمّا الثاني، ففيه سوء أدبٍ؛ لأنّ جميع كمالات المخلوقات بالنسبة إلى كمال الخالق نقائص؛ فشرحُ كمالِ الخالق بنِسَبٍ إضافيّةٍ[٥٦٣] إلى المخلوق[٥٦٤] سوءُ أدب.[٥٦٥]

فيا ربِّ العزّة! إني[٥٦٦] مقرٌّ بأني لا أقدر على مدحك إلاّ من أحد هذين الطريقين. ومقرٌّ بأنّ كلّ واحدٍ منهما لا يليق بجلالك وبعزّتك. ولكني كالمعذور؛ حيث[٥٦٧] لا أعرف شيئاً سواه، ولا أهتدي إلى ما هو أعلى منه.

فأسألك[٥٦٨] بوجوب وجودك، وكمال جودك، وهُويّة ألوهيّتك، وكمال صمديّتك، وبتلك الحقيقة التي لا يعرفها أحدٌ إلاّ أنت، وبتلك الكمالات التي لا يعرفها أحدٌ إلاّ أنت، أن تعفو عني في[٥٦٩] كلّ ما أخطأتُ، وأن تقبل مني

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[٥٥٩] س: فهمي وعقلي.

[٥٦٠] ل: فهو.

[٥٦١] س: الالتزام.

[٥٦٢] س: فانتم يستوجبوا.

[٥٦٣] س، ل، م: بسبب إضافته.

[٥٦٤] م: المخلوقات.

[٥٦٥] قارن: التفسير الكبير، ١، ١٢٥.

[٥٦٦] س: انا.

[٥٦٧] سقطت من س.

[٥٦٨] س: واسالك.

[٥٦٩] سقطت من ل.

كلَّ ما ارتضيتَه مني من الأعمال التي أتيتُ بها [م: ١٢٩ب] بمددِ توفيقك و[٥٧٠] برحمتك[٥٧١] وفضلك، يا أرحم الراحمين![٥٧٢]

كتبتُ من أوّل الرسالة، إلى أوّل باب ذمّ اللذّات الخياليّة، في بلدة هراة. وكتبتُ إلى آخره في بلدة خوارزم في دار السلطان، في آخر الرابع عشر من شعبان — خُتم بالروح والراحة والريحان — سنة أربع وستمئة.[٥٧٣]

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[٥٧٠] سقطت من ل.

[٥٧١] م: ورحمتك.

[٥٧٢] ل: قال المصنف رحمه الله. س: وصلّى الله على سيّدنا محمّدٍ وآله الطيّبين الطاهرين. م: وصلّى الله على سيّد الخلائق محمّد وعلى آله الطيّبين الطاهرين.

[٥٧٣] "كتبت من ... أربع وستمئةً" في ل فقط.

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INDEX OF NAMES

INDEX OF SUBJECTS